11316 a 8

THE

Homer

ODYSSEY

English

OF

HOMER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK

BY

ALEXANDER POPE, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by A. Donaldson, and sold at his Shop, No. 48, East corner of St. Paul's Church-yard, London; and at Edinburgh.

M. DCC. LXIX.

452/14

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE EPIC POEM, AND OF THE ILIAD AND ODYSSEY.

Extracted from BOSSU.

SECT. I.

THE fables of poets were originally employed in repreſenting the Divine Nature *, according to the notion then conceived of it. This ſublime ſubject occaſioned the firſt poets to be called divines, and poetry the language of the gods. They divided the divine attributes into ſo many perſons; becauſe the infirmity of a human mind cannot ſufficiently conceive, or explain, ſo much power and action in a ſimplicity ſo great and indiviſible as that of God. And perhaps they were alſo jealous of the advantages they reaped from ſuch excellent and exalted learning, and of which they thought the vulgar part of mankind was not worthy.

* Of the nature of epic poetry.

They could not deſcribe the operations of this almighty cauſe, without ſpeaking at the ſame time of its effects: ſo that to divinity they added phyſiology, and treated of both, without quitting the umbrages of their allegorical expreſſions.

But man being the chief and moſt noble of all that God produced, and nothing being ſo proper, or more uſeful to poets than this ſubject; they added it to the former, and treated of the doctrine of morality after the ſame manner as they did that of divinity and philoſophy: and from morality thus treated, is formed that kind of poem and fable which we call Epic.

The poets did the ſame in morality, that the divines had done in divinity. But that infinite variety of the actions and operations of the divine nature, (to which our underſtanding bears ſo ſmall a proportion,) did as it were force them upon dividing the ſingle idea of the only one God into ſeveral perſons, under the different names of Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, and the reſt.

And on the other hand, the nature of moral philoſophy being ſuch, as never to treat of things in particular, but in general; the epic poets were obliged to unite in one ſingle idea, in one and the ſame perſon, and in an action which appeared ſingular, all that looked like it in different perſons, and in various actions; which might be thus contained as ſo many ſpecies under their genus.

The preſence of the Deity, and the care ſuch an auguſt cauſe is to be ſuppoſed to take about any action, obliges the poet to repreſent this action as great, important, and managed by * kings and princes. It obliges him likewiſe to think and ſpeak in an elevated way above the vulgar, and in a ſtyle that may in ſome ſort keep up the character of the divine perſons he introduces. † To this end ſerve the poetical and figurative expreſſion, and the majeſty of the heroic verſe.

But all this, being divine and ſurpriſing, may quite ruin all probability: therefore the poet ſhould take a peculiar care as to that point, ſince his chief aim is to

* Res geſtæ regumque ducumque. Hor. Art. Poet.

† ——— Cui mens divinior atque os
Magna ſonaturum, des nominis hujus honorem. HORAT.

inſtruct,

inſtruct, and without probability any action is leſs likely to perſuade.

Laſtly, ſince precepts ought to be * conciſe, to be the more eaſily conceived, and leſs oppreſs the memory; and ſince nothing can be more effectual to this end than propoſing one ſingle idea, and collecting all things ſo well together, as to be preſent to our minds all at once; therefore the poets have reduced all to one † ſingle action, under one and the ſame deſign, and in a body whoſe members and parts ſhould be homogeneous.

What we have obſerved of the nature of the epic poem, gives us a juſt idea of it, and we may define it thus:

"The epic poem is a diſcourſe invented by art, to "form the manners, by ſuch inſtructions as are diſ-"guiſed under the allegories of ſome one important "action, which is related in verſe, after a probable, "diverting, and ſurpriſing manner."

SECT. II.

‡ In every deſign which a man deliberately undertakes, the end he propoſes is the firſt thing in his mind, and that by which he governs the whole work, and all its parts: thus ſince the end of the epic poem is to regulate the manners, it is with this firſt view the poet ought to begin.

But there is a great difference between the philoſophical and the poetical doctrine of manners. The ſchoolmen content themſelves with treating of virtues and vices in general: the inſtructions they give are proper for all ſtates, people, and for all ages. But the poet has a nearer regard to his own country, and the neceſſities of his own nation. With this deſign he makes choice of ſome piece of morality, the moſt proper and juſt he can imagine: and in order to preſs this home, he makes leſs uſe of the force of reaſon-

* Quicquid præcipies eſto brevis, ut citò dicta
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles. HOR. Poet.

† Denique ſit quodvis ſimplex duntaxat, et unum. Ibid.

‡ The fable of the Iliad.

ing, than of the power of inſinuation; accommodating himſelf to the particular cuſtoms and inclinations of thoſe, who are to be the ſubject, or the readers, of his work.

Let us now ſee how Homer has acquitted himſelf in theſe reſpects.

He ſaw the Grecians, for whom he deſigned his poem, were divided into as many ſtates as they had capital cities. Each was a body politic apart, and had its form of government independent from all the reſt. And yet theſe diſtinct ſtates were very often obliged to unite together in one body againſt their common enemies. Theſe were two very different ſorts of government, ſuch as could not be comprehended in one maxim of morality, and in one ſingle poem.

The poet therefore has made two diſtinct fables of them. The one is for Greece in general, united into one body, but compoſed of parts independent on each other; and the other for each particular ſtate, conſidered as they were in time of peace, without the former circumſtances, and the neceſſity of being united.

As for the firſt ſort of government, in the union, or rather in the confederacy, of many independent ſtates; experience has always made it appear, "That "nothing ſo much cauſes ſucceſs as a due ſubordina- "tion, and a right underſtanding among the chief "commanders. And on the other hand, the inevi- "table ruin of ſuch confederacies proceeds from the "heats, jealouſies, and ambition of the different lead- "ers, and the diſcontents of ſubmitting to a ſingle "general." All ſorts of ſtates, and in particular the Grecians, had dearly experienced this truth. So that the moſt uſeful and neceſſary inſtruction that could be given them, was, to lay before their eyes the loſs which both the people and the princes muſt of neceſſity ſuffer, by the ambition, diſcord, and obſtinacy of the latter.

Homer then has taken for the foundation of his fable this great truth: That a miſunderſtanding between princes is the ruin of their own ſtates "I ſing (ſays "he,) the anger of Achilles, ſo pernicious to the Gre- "cians, and the cauſe of ſo many heroes deaths, oc-

"caſioned

" caſioned by the diſcord and ſeparation of Agamem-
" non and that prince."

But that this truth may be completely and fully known, there is need of a ſecond to ſupport it. It is neceſſary in ſuch a deſign, not only to repreſent the confederate ſtates at firſt diſagreeing among themſelves, and from thence unfortunate; but to ſhow the ſame ſtates afterwards reconciled and united, and of conſequence victorious.

Let us now ſee how he has joined all theſe in one general action.

" Several princes, independent on one another,
" were united againſt a common enemy. The perſon
" whom they had elected their general, offers an af-
" front to the moſt valiant of all the confederates.
" This offended prince is ſo far provoked, as to relin-
" quiſh the union, and obſtinately refuſe to fight for
" the common cauſe. This miſunderſtanding gives
" the enemy ſuch an advantage, that the allies are
" very near quitting their deſign with diſhonour. He
" himſelf, who made the ſeparation, is not exempt
" from ſharing the misfortune which he brought upon
" his party. For having permitted his intimate friend
" to ſuccour them in a great neceſſity, this friend is
" killed by the enemy's general. Thus the contend-
" ing princes being both made wiſer at their own coſt,
" are reconciled, and unite again: then this valiant
" prince not only obtains the victory in the public
" cauſe, but revenges his private wrongs, by killing
" with his own hands the author of the death of his
" friend."

This is the firſt platform of the poem, and the fiction which reduces into one important and univerſal action all the particulars upon which it turns.

In the next place it muſt be rendered probable by the circumſtances of times, places, and perſons: ſome perſons muſt be found out, already known by hiſtory or otherwiſe, whom we may with probability make the actors and perſonages of this fable. Homer has made choice of the ſiege of Troy, and feigned that this action happened there. To a phantom of his brain, whom he would paint valiant and choleric, he has

given

given the name of Achilles; that of Agamemnon to his general; that of Hector to the enemy's commander; and so to the rest.

Besides, he was obliged to accommodate himself to the manners, customs, and genius of the Greeks his auditors, the better to make them attend to the instruction of his poem, and to gain their approbation by praising them: so that they might the better forgive him the representation of their own faults in some of his chief personages. He admirably discharges all these duties, by making these brave princes and those victorious people all Grecians, and the fathers of those he had a mind to commend.

But, not being content, in a work of such a length, to propose only the principal point of the moral, and to fill up the rest with useless ornaments and foreign incidents, he extends this moral by all its necessary consequences. As for instance, in the subject before us, it is not enough to know, that a good understanding ought always to be maintained among confederates: it is likewise of equal importance, that if there happens any division, care must be taken to keep it secret from the enemy, that their ignorance of this advantage may prevent their making use of it. And in the second place, when their concord is but counterfeit and only in appearance, one should never press the enemy too closely; for this would discover the weakness which we ought to conceal from them.

The episode of Patroclus most admirably furnishes us with these two instructions. For when he appeared in the arms of Achilles, the Trojans, who took him for that prince now reconciled and united to the confederates, immediately gave ground, and quitted the advantages they had before over the Greeks. But Patroclus, who should have been contented with this success, presses upon Hector too boldly, and by obliging him to fight, soon discovers, that it was not the true Achilles who was clad in his armour, but a hero of much inferior prowess. So that Hector kills him, and regains those advantages which the Trojans had lost, on the opinion that Achilles was reconciled.

SECT.

SECT. III.

* The Odyſſey was not deſigned, like the Iliad, for the inſtruction of all the ſtates of Greece joined in one body, but for each ſtate in particular. As a ſtate is compoſed of two parts; the head which commands, and the members which obey; there are inſtructions requiſite to both, to teach the one to govern, and the others to ſubmit to government.

There are two virtues neceſſary to one in authority, prudence to order, and care to ſee his orders put in execution. The prudence of a politician is not acquired but by a long experience in all ſorts of buſineſs, and by an acquaintance with all the different forms of governments and ſtates. The care of the adminiſtration ſuffers not him that has the government to rely upon others, but requires his own preſence: and kings who are abſent from their ſtates, are in danger of loſing them, and give occaſion to great diſorders and confuſion.

Theſe two points may be eaſily united in one and the ſame man. "A king forſakes his kingdom to viſit the courts of ſeveral princes, where he learns the "manners and cuſtoms of different nations. From "hence there naturally ariſes a vaſt number of inci"dents, of dangers, and of adventures, very uſeful "for a political inſtitution. On the other ſide, this "abſence gives way to the diſorders which happen in "his own kingdom, and which end not till his return, "whoſe preſence only can re-eſtabliſh all things." Thus the abſence of a king has the ſame effects in this fable, as the diviſion of the princes had in the former.

The ſubjects have ſcarce any need but of one general maxim, which is, To ſuffer themſelves to be governed, and to obey faithfully; whatever reaſon they may imagine againſt the orders they receive. It is eaſy to join this inſtruction with the other, by beſtowing on this wiſe and induſtrious prince ſuch ſubjects, as in his abſence would rather follow their own judgement than his commands; and by demonſtrating the

* The fable of the Odyſſey.

misfortunes

misfortunes which this diſobedience draws upon them, the evil conſequences which almoſt infallibly attend theſe particular notions, which are intirely different from the general idea of him who ought to govern.

But as it was neceſſary that the princes in the Iliad ſhould be choleric and quarrelſome, ſo it is neceſſary in the fable of the Odyſſey, that the chief perſon ſhould be ſage and prudent. This raiſes a difficulty in the fiction; becauſe this perſon ought to be abſent for the two reaſons afore-mentioned, which are eſſential to the fable, and which conſtitute the principal aim of it: but he cannot abſent himſelf, without offending againſt another maxim of equal importance, viz. That a king ſhould upon no account leave his country.

It is true, there are ſometimes ſuch neceſſities as ſufficiently excuſe the prudence of a politician in this point. But ſuch a neceſſity is a thing important enough of itſelf to ſupply matter for another poem, and this multiplication of the action would be vicious. To prevent which, in the firſt place, this neceſſity, and the departure of the hero muſt be disjoined from the poem; and in the ſecond place, the hero having been obliged to abſent himſelf, for a reaſon antecedent to the action, and placed diſtinct from the fable, he ought not ſo far to embrace this opportunity of inſtructing himſelf, as to abſent himſelf voluntarily from his own government. For at this rate, his abſence would be merely voluntary, and one might with reaſon lay to his charge all the diſorders which might ariſe.

Thus in the conſtitution of the fable he ought not to take for his action, and for the foundation of his poem, the departure of a prince from his own country, nor his voluntary ſtay in any other place; but his return, and this return retarded againſt his will. This is the firſt idea Homer gives us of it. * His hero appears at firſt in a deſolate iſland, ſitting upon the ſide of the ſea, which with tears in his eyes he looks upon as the obſtacle that had ſo long oppoſed his return, and detained him from reviſiting his own dear country.

* Odyſſey v.

And

And laſtly, ſince this forced delay might more naturally and uſually happen to ſuch as make voyages by ſea; Homer has judiciouſly made choice of a prince whoſe kingdom was in an iſland

Let us ſee then how he has feigned all this action, making his hero a perſon in years, becauſe years are requiſite to inſtruct a man in prudence and policy.

"A prince had been obliged to forſake his native "country, and to head an army of his ſubjects in a "foreign expedition. Having glorioufly performed "this enterpriſe, he was marching home again, and "conducting his ſubjects to his own ſtate. But ſpite "of all the attempts, with which the eagerneſs to "return had inſpired him, he was ſtopt by the way "by tempeſts for ſeveral years, and caſt upon ſeveral "countries differing from each other in manners and "government. In theſe dangers his companions not "always following his orders, periſh through their "own fault. The grandees of his country ſtrangely "abuſe his abſence, and raiſe no ſmall diſorders at "home. They conſume his eſtate, conſpire to deſtroy "his ſon, would conſtrain his queen to accept of one "of them for her huſband; and indulge themſelves "in all violence, ſo much the more, becauſe they "were perſuaded he would never return. But at laſt "he returns, and, diſcovering himſelf only to his ſon, "and ſome others, who had continued firm to him, "he is an eye-witneſs of the inſolence of his enemies, "puniſhes them according to their deſerts, and re-"ſtores to his iſland that tranquillity and repoſe to "which they had been ſtrangers during his abſence."

As the truth, which ſerves for foundation to this fiction, is, that the abſence of a perſon from his own home, or his neglect of his own affairs, is the cauſe of great diſorders; ſo the principal point of the action, and the moſt eſſential one, is the abſence of the hero. This fills almoſt all the poem: for not only this real abſence laſted ſeveral years, but even when the hero returned, he does not diſcover himſelf; and this prudent diſguiſe, from whence he reaped ſo much advantage, has the ſame effect upon the authors of the diſorders, and all others who knew him not, as his real

abſence

abſence had before, ſo that he is abſent as to them, till the very moment of their puniſhment.

After the poet had thus compoſed his fable, and joined the fiction to the truth, he then makes choice of Ulyſſes, the king of the iſle of Ithaca, to maintain the character of his chief perſonage, and beſtowed the reſt upon Telemachus, Penelope, Antinous, and others, whom he calls by what names he pleaſes.

I ſhall not here inſiſt upon the many excellent advices, which are ſo many parts and natural conſequences of the fundamental truth; and which the poet very dextrouſly lays down in thoſe fictions which are the epiſodes and members of the entire action. Such for inſtance are theſe advices; not to intrude one's ſelf into the myſteries of government, which the prince keeps ſecret: this is repreſented to us by the winds ſhut up in a bull-hide, which the miſerable companions of Ulyſſes would needs be ſo fooliſh as to pry into. Not to ſuffer one's ſelf to be led away by the ſeeming charms of an idle and inactive life, to which the Siren's ſong invited *. Not to ſuffer one's ſelf to be ſenſualiſed by pleaſures, like thoſe who were changed into brutes by Circe: and a great many other points of morality neceſſary for all ſorts of people.

This poem is more uſeful to the people than the Iliad, where the ſubjects ſuffer rather by the ill conduct of their princes, than through their own miſcarriages. But in the Odyſſey, it is not the fault of Ulyſſes that is the ruin of his ſubjects. This wiſe prince leaves untried no method to make them partakers of the benefit of his return. Thus the poet in the Iliad ſays, "He "ſings the anger of Achilles, which had cauſed the "death of ſo many Grecians;" and, on the contrary, in the † Odyſſey he tells his readers, "That the ſub-"jects periſhed through their own fault.

SECT. IV.

‡ Ariſtotle beſtows great encomiums upon Homer for the ſimplicity of his deſign, becauſe he has inclu-

* Improba Siren deſidia. HORAT.

† Αυτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο.

‡ Of the unity of the fable.

ded in one ſingle part all that happened at the ſiege of Troy. And to this he oppoſes the ignorance of ſome poets, who imagined that the unity of the fable or action was ſufficiently preſerved by the unity of the hero; and who compoſed their Theſeids, Heracleids, and the like, wherein they only heaped up in one poem every thing that happened to one perſonage.

He finds fault with thoſe poets who were for reducing the unity of the fable into the unity of the hero, becauſe one man may have performed ſeveral adventures, which it is impoſſible to reduce under any one general and ſimple head. This reducing of all things to unity and ſimplicity is what Horace likewiſe makes his firſt rule.

"Denique ſit quodvis ſimplex duntaxat, & unum."

According to theſe rules, it will be allowable to make uſe of ſeveral fables; (or to ſpeak more correctly) of ſeveral incidents which may be divided into ſeveral fables; provided they are ſo ordered, that the unity of the fable be not ſpoiled. This liberty is ſtill greater in the epic poem, becauſe it is of a larger extent, and ought to be entire and complete

I will explain myſelf more diſtinctly by the practice of Homer.

No doubt but one might make four diſtinct fables out of theſe four following inſtructions.

1. Diviſion between thoſe of the ſame party expoſes them entirely to their enemies.

2. Conceal your weakneſs, and you will be dreaded as much as if you had none of thoſe imperfections, of which they are ignorant.

3. When your ſtrength is only feigned, and founded only in the opinion of others; never venture ſo far as if your ſtrength was real.

4. The more you agree together, the leſs hurt can your enemies do you.

It is plain, I ſay, that each of theſe particular maxims might ſerve for the ground-work of a fiction, and one might make four diſtinct fables out of them. May not one then put all theſe into one ſingle Epopea? Not

unleſs one ſingle fable can be made out of all. The poet indeed may have ſo much ſkill as to unite all into one body, as members and parts, each of which taken aſunder would be imperfect; and if he joins them ſo, this conjunction ſhall be no hindrance at all to the unity and the regular ſimplicity of the fable. This is what Homer has done with ſuch ſucceſs in the compoſition of the Iliad.

1. The diviſion betweeen Achilles and his allies, tending to the ruin of their deſigns. 2 Patroclus comes to their relief in the armour of this hero, and Hector retreats. 3 But this young man, puſhing the advantage which his diſguiſe gave him too far, ventures to engage with Hector himſelf; but not being maſter of Achilles's ſtrength, (whom he only repreſented in outward appearance), he is killed, and by this means leaves the Grecian affairs in the ſame diſorder, from which in that diſguiſe he came to free them. 4. Achilles, provoked at the death of his friend, is reconciled, and revenges his loſs by the death of Hector. Theſe various incidents being thus united, do not make different actions and fables, but are only the uncomplete and unfiniſhed parts of one and the ſame action and fable, which alone when taken thus complexly, can be ſaid to be complete and entire: and all theſe maxims of the moral, are eaſily reduced into theſe two parts, which in my opinion cannot be ſeparated without enervating the force of both. The two parts are theſe, * That a right underſtanding is the preſervation, and diſcord the deſtruction of ſtates.

Though then the poet has made uſe of two parts in his poems, each of which might have ſerved for a fable, as we have obſerved: yet this multiplication cannot be called a vicious and irregular Polymythia, contrary to the neceſſary unity and ſimplicity of the fable; but it gives the fable another qualification, altogether neceſſary and regular, namely, its perfection and finiſhing ſtroke.

* Concordiâ res parvæ creſcunt: diſcordiâ magnæ dilabuntur. SALLUST. de bello Jug.

SECT.

SECT. V.

* The action of a poem is the ſubject which the poet undertakes, propoſes, and builds upon. So that the moral and the inſtructions, which are the end of the epic poem, are not the matter of it. Theſe the poets leave in their allegorical and figurative obſcurity. They only give notice at the exordium, that they ſing ſome action: The revenge of Achilles, the return of Ulyſſes, &c.

Since then the action is the matter of a fable, it is evident that whatever incidents are eſſential to the fable, or conſtitute a part of it, are neceſſary alſo to the action, and are parts of the epic matter, none of which ought to be omitted. Such, for inſtance, are the contention of Agamemnon and Achilles, the ſlaughter Hector makes in the Grecian army, the re-union of the Greek princes; and laſtly, the re ſettlement and victory which was the conſequence of that re-union.

There are four qualifications in the epic action: the firſt is its unity, the ſecond its integrity, the third its importance, the fourth its duration.

The unity of the epic action, as well as the unity of the fable, does not conſiſt either in the unity of the hero, or in the unity of time: three things I ſuppoſe are neceſſary to it. The firſt is, to make uſe of no epiſode but what ariſes from the very platform and foundation of the action, and is as it were a natural member of the body. The ſecond is, exactly to unite theſe epiſodes and theſe members with one another. And the third is, never to finiſh any epiſode ſo as it may ſeem to be an entire action; but to let each epiſode ſtill appear in its own particular nature, as the member of a body, and as a part of itſelf not complete.

† Ariſtotle not only ſays, that the epic action ſhould be one, but adds, that it ſhould be entire, perfect, and complete; and for this purpoſe ought to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Theſe three parts of a whole are too generally and univerſally denoted by the words beginning, middle, and end; we may interpret

* Of the action of the epic poem.

† Of the beginning, middle, and end of the action.

them more preciſely, and ſay, That the cauſes and deſigns of an action are the beginning: that the effects of theſe cauſes, and the difficulties that are met with in the execution of theſe deſigns, are the middle; and that the unravelling and reſolution of theſe difficulties are the end.

* Homer's deſign in the Iliad is to relate the anger and revenge of Achilles. The beginning of this action is the change of Achilles from a calm to a paſſionate temper. The middle is the effects of his paſſion, and all the illuſtrious deaths it is the cauſe of. The end of this ſame action is the return of Achilles to his calmneſs of temper again. All was quiet in the Grecian camp, when Agamemnon their general provokes Apollo againſt them, whom he was willing to appeaſe afterwards at the coſt and prejudice of Achilles, who had no part in his fault. This then is an exact beginning: it ſuppoſes nothing before, and requires after it the effects of this anger. Achilles revenges himſelf, and that is an exact middle; it ſuppoſes before it the anger of Achilles, this revenge is the effect of it. Then this middle requires after it the effects of this revenge, which is the ſatisfaction of Achilles: for the revenge had not been complete, unleſs Achilles had been ſatisfied. By this means the poet makes his hero, after he was glutted by the miſchief he had done to Agamemnon, by the death of Hector, and the honour he did his friend, by inſulting over his murderer; he makes him, I ſay, to be moved by the tears and misfortunes of king Priam. We ſee him as calm at the end of the poem, during the funeral of Hector, as he was at the beginning of the poem, whilſt the plague raged among the Grecians. This end is juſt, ſince the calmneſs of temper Achilles re-enjoyed, is only an effect of the revenge which ought to have preceded: and after this nobody expects any more of his anger. Thus has Homer been very exact in the beginning, middle, and end of the action he made choice of for the ſubject of his Iliad.

† His deſign in the Odyſſey was to deſcribe the re-

* The action of the Iliad.

† The action of the Odyſſey.

turn

turn of Ulyſſes from the ſiege of Troy, and his arrival at Ithaca. He opens this poem with the complaints of Minerva againſt Neptune, who oppoſed the return of this hero, and againſt Calypſo, who detained him in an iſland from Ithaca. Is this a beginning? No; doubtleſs, the reader would know why Neptune is diſpleaſed with Ulyſſes, and how this prince came to be with Calypſo? He would know how he came from Troy thither? The poet anſwers his demands out of the mouth of Ulyſſes himſelf, who relates theſe things, and begins the action, by the recital of his travels from the city of Troy. It ſignifies little whether the beginning of the action be the beginning of the poem. The beginning of this action is that which happens to Ulyſſes, when upon his leaving Troy he bends his courſe for Ithaca. The middle comprehends all the misfortunes he endured, and all the diſorders of his own government. The end is the re-inſtating of the hero in the peaceable poſſeſſion of his kingdom, where he was acknowledged by his ſon, his wife, his father, and ſeveral others. The poet was ſenſible he ſhould have ended ill, had he gone no farther than the death of theſe princes, who were the rivals and enemies of Ulyſſes, becauſe the reader might have looked for ſome revenge which the ſubjects of theſe princes might have taken, on him who had killed their ſovereigns: but this danger over, and the people vanquiſhed and quieted, there was nothing more to be expected. The poem and the action have all their parts, and no more.

But the order of the Odyſſey differs from that of the Iliad, in that the poem does not begin with the beginning of the action.

* The cauſes of the action are alſo what the poet is obliged to give an account of. There are three ſorts of cauſes, the humours, the intereſts, and the deſigns of men; and theſe different cauſes of an action are likewiſe often the cauſes of one another, every man taking up thoſe intereſts in which his humour engages him, and forming thoſe deſigns to which his humour and intereſt incline him. Of all theſe the poet

* Of the cauſes and beginning of the action,

ought to inform his readers, and render them conſpicuous in his principal perſonages.

Homer has ingeniouſly begun his Odyſſey with the tranſactions at Ithaca, during the abſence of Ulyſſes. If he had begun with the travels of his hero, he would ſcarce have ſpoken of any one elſe, and a man might have read a great deal of the poem, without conceiving the leaſt idea of Telemachus, Penelope, or her ſuitors, who had ſo great a ſhare in the action; but in the beginning he has pitched upon, beſides theſe perſonages whom he diſcovers, he repreſents Ulyſſes in his full length, and from the very firſt opening one ſees the intereſt which the gods take in the action.

The ſkill and care of the ſame poet may be ſeen likewiſe in introducing his perſonages in the firſt book of his Iliad where he diſcovers the humours, the intereſts, and the deſigns of Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, Ulyſſes, and ſeveral others, and even of the deities. And in his ſecond he makes a review of the Grecian and Trojan armies, which is full evidence, that all we have here ſaid is very neceſſary.

* As theſe cauſes are the beginning of the action, the oppoſite deſigns againſt that of the hero are the middle of it, and form that difficulty or intrigue, which makes up the greateſt part of the poem; the ſolution or unravelling commences when the reader begins to ſee that difficulty removed, and the doubts cleared up. Homer has divided each of his poems into two parts, and has put a particular intrigue, and the ſolution of it, into each part

The firſt part of the Iliad is the anger of Achilles, who is for revenging himſelf upon Agamemnon by the means of Hector and the Trojans. The intrigue comprehends the three days fight which happened in the abſence of Achilles: and it conſiſts on one ſide in the reſiſtance of Agamemnon and the Grecians; and on the other, in the revengeful and inexorable humour of Achilles, which would not ſuffer him to be reconciled. The loſs of the Grecians, and the deſpair of Agamemnon, prepare for a ſolution, by the ſatisfac-

* Of the middle or intrigue of the action.

tion

tion which the incenſed hero received from it. The death of Patroclus joined to the offers of Agamemnon, which of itſelf had proved ineffectual, remove this difficulty, and make the unravelling of the firſt part.

This death is likewiſe the beginning of the ſecond part; ſince it puts Achilles upon the deſign of revenging himſelf on Hector. But the deſign of Hector is oppoſite to that of Achilles: this Trojan is valiant, and reſolved to ſtand on his own defence. This valour and reſolution of Hector are on his part the cauſe of the intrigue. All the endeavours Achilles uſed, to meet with Hector and be the death of him; and the contrary endeavours of the Trojan to keep out of his reach, and defend himſelf, are the intrigue; which comprehends the battle of the laſt day. The unravelling begins at the death of Hector; and beſides that, it contains the inſulting of Achilles over his body, the honours he paid to Patroclus, and the intreaties of king Priam. The regrets of this king and the other Trojans, in the ſorrowful obſequies they paid to Hector's body, end the unravelling; they juſtify the ſatisfaction of Achilles, and demonſtrate his tranquillity.

The firſt part of the Odyſſey is the return of Ulyſſes into Ithaca. Neptune oppoſes it by raiſing tempeſts, and this makes the intrigue. The unravelling is the arrival of Ulyſſes upon his own iſland, where Neptune could offer him no farther injury. The ſecond part is the re-inſtating this hero in his own government. The princes that are his rivals oppoſe him, and this is a freſh intrigue: the ſolution of it begins at their deaths, and is completed as ſoon as the Ithacans were appeaſed.

Theſe two parts in the Odyſſey have not one common intrigue. The anger of Achilles forms both the intrigues in the Iliad; and it is ſo far the matter of this Epopea, that the very beginning and end of this poem depend on the beginning and end of this anger. But let the deſire Achilles had to revenge himſelf, and the deſire Ulyſſes had to return to his own country, be never ſo near allied, yet we cannot place them under one and the ſame notion; for that deſire of Ulyſſes is not a paſſion that begins and ends

in

in the poem with the action: it is a natural habit: nor does the poet propoſe it for his ſubject, as he does the anger of Achilles.

We have already obſerved what is meant by the intrigue, and the unravelling thereof; let us now ſay ſomething of the manner of forming both. Theſe two ſhould ariſe naturally out of the very eſſence and ſubject of the poem, and are to be deduced from thence. Their conduct is ſo exact and natural, that it ſeems as if their action had preſented them with whatever they inſerted, without putting themſelves to the trouble of a farther enquiry.

What is more uſual and natural to warriors, than anger, heat, paſſion, and impatience of bearing the leaſt affront or diſreſpect? This is what forms the intrigue of the Iliad; and every thing we read there is nothing elſe but the effect of this humour and theſe paſſions.

What more natural and uſual obſtacle to thoſe who take voyages, than the ſea, the winds, and the ſtorms? Homer makes this the intrigue of the firſt part of the Odyſſey: and for the ſecond, he makes uſe of almoſt the infallible effect of the long abſence of a maſter, whoſe return is quite deſpaired of, viz. the inſolence of his ſervants and neighbours, the danger of his ſon and wife, and the ſequeſtration of his eſtate. Beſides, an abſence of almoſt twenty years, and the inſupportable fatigues joined to the age of which Ulyſſes then was, might induce him to believe that he ſhould not be owned by thoſe who thought him dead, and whoſe intereſt it was to have him really ſo. Therefore, if he had preſently declared who he was, and had called himſelf Ulyſſes, they would eaſily have deſtroyed him as an impoſtor, before he had an opportunity to make himſelf known.

There could be nothing more natural nor more neceſſary than this ingenious diſguiſe, to which the advantages his enemies had taken of his abſence had reduced him, and to which his long misfortunes had inured him. This allowed him an opportunity, without hazarding any thing, of taking the beſt meaſures he could, againſt thoſe perſons who could not ſo much

as

as miſtruſt any harm from him. This way was afforded him by the very nature of his action, to execute his deſigns, and overcome the obſtacles it caſt before him. And it is this conteſt between the prudence and the diſſimulation of a ſingle man on one hand, and the ungovernable inſolence of ſo many rivals on the other, which conſtitutes the intrigue of the ſecond part of the Odyſſey.

* If the plot or intrigue muſt be natural, and ſuch as ſprings from the very ſubject, as has been already urged; then the winding up of the plot, by a more ſure claim, muſt have this qualification, and be a probable conſequence of all that went before. As this is what the readers regard more than the reſt, ſo ſhould the poet be more exact in it. This is the end of the poem, and the laſt impreſſion that is to be ſtamped upon them.

We ſhall find this in the Odyſſey. Ulyſſes by a tempeſt is caſt upon the iſland of the Phæacians, to whom he diſcovers himſelf, and deſires they would favour his return to his own country, which was not very far diſtant. One cannot ſee any reaſon why the king of this iſland ſhould refuſe ſuch a reaſonable requeſt, to a hero whom he ſeemed to have in great eſteem. The Phæacians indeed had heard him tell the ſtory of his adventures; and in this fabulous recital conſiſted all the advantage that he could derive from his preſence; for the art of war which they admired in him, his undauntedneſs under dangers, his indefatigable patience, and other virtues, were ſuch as theſe iſlanders were not uſed to. All their talent lay in ſinging and dancing, and whatſoever was charming in a quiet life. And here we ſee how dextrouſly Homer prepares the incidents he makes uſe of. Theſe people could do no leſs, for the account with which Ulyſſes had ſo much entertained them, than afford him a ſhip and a ſafe convoy, which was of little expence or trouble to them.

When he arrived, his long abſence, and the travels which had diſfigured him, made him altogether unknown; and the danger he would have incurred, had

* Of the end or unravelling of the action.

he

he diſcovered himſelf too ſoon, forced him to a diſguiſe: laſtly, this diſguiſe gave him an opportunity of ſurpriſing thoſe young ſuitors, who for ſeveral years together had been accuſtomed to nothing but to ſleep well, and fare daintily.

It was from theſe examples that Ariſtotle drew this rule, that "Whatever concludes the poem, ſhould ſo "ſpring from the very conſtitution of the fable, as if "it were a neceſſary, or at leaſt a probable conſe-"quence."

SECT. VI.

* The time of the epic action is not fixed, like that of the dramatic poem: it is much longer; for an uninterrupted duration is much more neceſſary in an action which one ſees and is preſent at, than in one which we only read or hear repeated. Beſides, tragedy is fuller of paſſion, and conſequently of ſuch a violence as cannot admit of ſo long a duration.

The Iliad containing an action of anger and violence, the poet allows it but a ſhort time, about forty days. The deſign of the Odyſſey required another conduct; the character of the hero is prudence and long-ſuffering; therefore the time of its duration is much longer, above eight years.

† The paſſions of tragedy are different from thoſe of the epic poem. In the former, terror and pity have the chief place; the paſſion that ſeems moſt peculiar to epic poetry, is admiration.

Beſides this admiration, which in general diſtinguiſhes the epic poem from the dramatic; each epic poem has likewiſe ſome peculiar paſſion, which diſtinguiſhes it in particular from other epic poems, and conſtitutes a kind of ſingular and individual difference between theſe poems of the ſame ſpecies. Theſe ſingular paſſions correſpond to the character of the hero. Anger and terror reign throughout the Iliad, becauſe Achilles is angry, and the moſt terrible of all men. The Æneid has all the ſoft and tender paſſions, becauſe

* The time of the action.
† The paſſions of the epic poem.

that

that is the character of Æneas. The prudence, wiſdom, and conſtancy of Ulyſſes do not allow him either of theſe extremes, therefore the poet does not permit one of them to be predominant in the Odyſſey. He confines himſelf to admiration only, which he carries to an higher pitch than in the Iliad; and it is upon this account that he introduces a great many more machines in the Odyſſey, into the body of the action, than are to be ſeen in the actions of the other two poems.

* The manners of the epic poem ought to be poetically good, but it is not neceſſary they be always morally ſo. They are poetically good, when one may diſcover the virtue or vice, the good or ill inclinations, of every one who ſpeaks or acts: they are poetically bad, when perſons are made to ſpeak or act out of character, or inconſiſtently or unequally. The manners of Æneas and of Mezentius are equally good, conſidered poetically, becauſe they equally demonſtrate the piety of the one, and the impiety of the other.

† It is requiſite to make the ſame diſtinction between a hero in morality, and a hero in poetry, as between moral and poetical goodneſs. Achilles had as much right to the latter as Æneas. Ariſtotle ſays, that the hero of a poem ſhould be neither good nor bad; neither advanced above the reſt of mankind by his virtues, or ſunk beneath them by his vices; that he may be the proper and fuller example to others, both what to imitate and what to decline.

The other qualifications of the manners are, that they be ſuitable to the cauſes which either raiſe or diſcover them in the perſons; that they have an exact reſemblance to what hiſtory, or fable, have delivered of thoſe perſons to whom they are aſcribed; and that there be an equality in them, ſo that no man is made to act, or ſpeak, out of his character.

‡ But this equality is not ſufficient for the unity of the character; it is further neceſſary, that the ſame ſpirit appear in all ſort of encounters. Thus Æneas acting with great piety and mildneſs in the firſt part of

* The manners. † Character of the hero.
‡ Unity of the character.

the

the Æneid, which requires no other character; and afterwards appearing illuſtrious in heroic valour, in the wars of the ſecond part; but there, without any appearance either of a hard or a ſoft diſpoſition; would, doubtleſs, be far from offending againſt the equality of the manners: but yet there would be no ſimplicity or unity in the character. So that, beſides the qualities that claim their particular place upon different occaſions, there muſt be one appearing throughout, which commands over all the reſt; and without this, we may affirm, it is no character.

One may indeed make a hero as valiant as Achilles, as pious as Æneas, and as prudent as Ulyſſes. But it is a mere chimæra to imagine a hero that has the valour of Achilles, the piety of Æneas, and the prudence of Ulyſſes, at one and the ſame time. This viſion might happen to an author, who would ſuit the character of a hero to whatever each part of the action might naturally require, without regarding the eſſence of the fable, or the unity of the character in the ſame perſon upon all ſorts of occaſions: this hero would be the mildeſt, beſt-natured prince in the world, and alſo the moſt choleric, hard hearted, and implacable creature imaginable; he would be extremely tender like Æneas, extremely violent like Achilles, and yet have the indifference of Ulyſſes, that is incapable of the two extremes. Would it not be in vain for the poet to call this perſon by the ſame name throughout.

Let us reflect on the effects it would produce in ſeveral poems, whoſe authors were of opinion, that the chief character of a hero is that of an accompliſhed man. They would be all alike; all valiant in battle, prudent in council, pious in the acts of religion, courteous, civil, magnificent; and, laſtly, endued with all the prodigious virtues any poet could invent. All this would be independent of the action and the ſubject of the poem; and, upon ſeeing each hero ſeparated from the reſt of the work, we ſhould not eaſily gueſs to what action, and to what poem, the hero belonged. So that we ſhould ſee, that none of thoſe would have a character; ſince the character is that which makes a perſon

a perſon diſcernible, and which diſtinguiſhes him from all others.

This commanding quality in Achilles, is his anger; in Ulyſſes, the art of diſſimulation; in Æneas, meekneſs. Each of theſe may be ſtiled, by way of eminence, the character in theſe heroes.

But theſe characters cannot be alone. It is abſolutely neceſſary that ſome other ſhould give them a luſtre, and embelliſh them as far as they are capable: either by hiding the defects that are in each, by ſome noble and ſhining qualities; as the poet has done the anger of Achilles, by ſhading it with extraordinary valour: or by making them entirely of the nature of a true and ſolid virtue, as is to be obſerved in the two others. The diſſimulation of Ulyſſes is a part of his prudence; and the meekneſs of Æneas is wholly employed in ſubmitting his will to the gods. For the making up this union, our poets have joined together ſuch qualities as are by nature the moſt compatible; valour with anger, meekneſs with piety, and prudence with diſſimulation. This laſt union was neeeſſary for the goodneſs of Ulyſſes; for without that, his diſſimulation might have degenerated into wickedneſs and double-dealing.

SECT. VII.

* We come now to the machines of the epic poem. The chief paſſion which it aims to excite being admiration, nothing is ſo conducive to that as the marvellous; and the importance and dignity of the action is by nothing ſo greatly elevated, as by the care and interpoſition of heaven.

The machines are of three ſorts. Some are theological, and were invented to explain the nature of the gods. Others are phyſical, and repreſent the things of nature. The laſt are moral, and are the images of virtues and vices.

Homer and the ancients have given to their deities the manners, paſſions, and vices of men. Their poems

* Of the machinery.

are wholly allegorical; and in this view it is eaſier to defend Homer, than to blame him. We cannot accuſe him for making mention of many gods, for his beſtowing paſſions upon them, or even introducing them fighting againſt men. The Scripture uſes the like figures and expreſſions

If it be allowable to ſpeak thus of the gods in theology, much more in the fictions of natural philoſophy, where, if a poet deſcribes the deities, he muſt give them ſuch manners, ſpeeches, and actions, as are conformable to the nature of the things they repreſent under thoſe divinities. The caſe is the ſame in the morals of the deities: Minerva is wiſe becauſe ſhe repreſents prudence; Venus is both good or bad, becauſe the paſſion of love is capable of theſe contrary qualities.

Since among the gods of a poem ſome are good, ſome bad, and ſome indifferently either; and ſince of our paſſions we make ſo many allegorical deities; we may attribute to the gods all that is done in the poem, whether good or evil. But theſe deities do not act conſtantly in one and the ſame manner.

Sometimes they act inviſibly, and by mere inſpiration; which has nothing in it extraordinary or miraculous: being no more than what we ſay every day, "That ſome god has aſſiſted us, or ſome dæmon has "inſtigated us."

At other times they appear viſibly, and manifeſt themſelves to men, in a manner altogether miraculous and præternatural.

The third way has ſomething of both the others; it is in truth a miracle, but is not commonly ſo accounted: this includes dreams, oracles, &c.

All theſe ways muſt be probable; for however neceſſary the marvellous is to the epic action, as nothing is ſo conducive to admiration; yet we can, on the other hand, admire nothing, that we think impoſſible. Though the probability of theſe machines be of a very large extent, (ſince it is founded upon divine power), it is not without limitations. There are numerous inſtances of allowable and probable machines in the epic poem, where the gods are no leſs actors than the men.

But

But the leſs credible ſort, ſuch as metamorphoſes, &c. are far more rare.

This ſuggeſts a reflection on the method of rendering thoſe machines probable, which in their own nature are hardly ſo. Thoſe which require only divine probability, ſhould be ſo diſengaged from the action, that one might ſubtract them from it, without deſtroying the action. But thoſe which are eſſential and neceſſary, ſhould be grounded upon human probability, and not on the ſole power of God. Thus the epiſodes of Circe, the Syrens, Polyphemus, &c. are neceſſary to the action of the Odyſſey, and yet not humanly probable: yet Homer has artificially reduced them to human probability, by the ſimplicity and ignorance of the Phæacians, before whom he cauſes thoſe recitals to be made.

The next queſtion is, Where, and on what occaſions, machines may be uſed? It is certain Homer and Virgil make uſe of them every where, and ſcarce ſuffer any action to be performed without them. Petronius makes this a precept: "Per ambages, deorum-"que miniſteria, &c." The gods are mentioned in the very propoſition of their works, the invocation is addreſt to them, and the whole narration is full of them. The gods are the cauſes of the action, they form the intrigue, and bring about the ſolution. The precept of Ariſtotle and Horace, that the unravelling of the plot ſhould not proceed from a miracle, or the appearance of a god, has place only in dramatic poetry, not in the epic For it is plain, that both in the ſolution of the Iliad and Odyſſey, the gods are concerned: in the former, the deities meet to appeaſe the anger of Achilles: Iris and Mercury are ſent to that purpoſe, and Minerva eminently aſſiſts Achilles in the deciſive combat with Hector. In the Odyſſey, the ſame goddeſs fights cloſe by Ulyſſes againſt the ſuitors, and concludes that peace betwixt him and the Ithacenſians, which completes the poem.

We may therefore determine, that a machine is not an invention to extricate the poet out of any difficulty which embarraſſes him: but that the preſence of a divinity, and ſome action ſurpriſing and extraordinary,

are inſerted into almoſt all the parts of his work, in order to render it more majeſtic and more admirable. But this mixture ought to be ſo made, that the machines might be retrenched, without taking any thing from the action: at the ſame time that it gives the readers a leſſon of piety and virtue; and teaches them, that the moſt brave and the moſt wiſe can do nothing, and attain nothing great and glorious, without the aſſiſtance of heaven. Thus the machinery crowns the whole work, and renders it at once, marvellous, probable, and moral.

THE

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

Minerva's deſcent to Ithaca.

The poem opens within forty-eight days of the arrival of Ulyſſes in his dominions. He had now remained ſeven years in the iſland of Calypſo, when the gods aſſembled in council propoſed the method of his departure from thence, and his return to his native country. For this purpoſe it is concluded to ſend Mercury to Calypſo, and Pallas immediately deſcends to Ithaca. She holds a conference with Telemachus, in the ſhape of Mentes king of the Taphians; in which ſhe adviſes him to take a journey in queſt of his father Ulyſſes to Pylos and Sparta, where Neſtor and Menelaus yet reigned; then, after having viſibly diſplayed her divinity, diſappears. The ſuitors of Penelope make great entertainments, and riot in her palace till night. Phemius ſings to them the return of the Grecians, till Penelope puts a ſtop to the ſong. Some words ariſe between the ſuitors and Telemachus, who ſummons the council to meet the day following.

THE man, for wiſdom's various arts renown'd,
Long exercis'd in woes, Oh muſe! reſound.
Who, when his arms had wrought the deſtin'd fall
Of ſacred Troy, and raz'd her heav'n built wall,
Wand'ring from clime to clime, obſervant ſtray'd,
Their manners noted, and their ſtates ſurvey'd.

On ſtormy ſeas unnumber'd toils he bore,
Safe with his friends to gain his natal ſhore:

Vain

We ſhall proceed in the ſame method through the courſe of theſe annotations upon the Odyſſey, as thoſe in the Iliad; conſidering Homer chiefly as a poet, endeavouring to make his beauties underſtood, and not to praiſe without a reaſon given. It is equally an extreme, on the one hand to think Homer has no human defects; and on the other to dwell ſo much upon theſe defects, as to depreciate his beauties. The greater part of critics form a general character, from the obſervation of particular errors, taken in their own oblique or imperfect views; which is as unjuſt, as to make a judgement of the beauty of a man's body from the ſhadow it happens to caſt, in ſuch or ſuch a poſition. To convince the reader of this intended impartiality, we readily allow the Odyſſey to be inferior to the Iliad in many reſpects. It has not that ſublimity of ſpirit, or that enthuſiaſm of poetry; but then it muſt be allowed, if it be leſs noble, it is more inſtructive: the other abounds with more heroiſm, this with more morality. The Iliad gives us a draught of gods and heroes, of diſcord, of contentions, and ſcenes of ſlaughter; the Odyſſey ſets before us a ſcene more amiable, the landſcapes of nature; the pleaſures of private life, the duties of every ſtation, the hoſpitality of ancient times; a leſs buſy, but more agreeable portrait. The Iliad concludes with the ruin, the Odyſſey with the happineſs of a nation.

Ver. 1. *For wiſdom's various arts renown'd.*] Boſſu's obſervations in relation to this epithet given to Ulyſſes, is worth tranſcribing. The fable of the Odyſſey (ſays he) is wholly for the conduct and policy of a ſtate: therefore the quality it requires is wiſdom; but this virtue is of too large an extent for the ſimplicity which a juſt and preciſe character requires; it is therefore requiſite it ſhould be limited. The great art of kings is the myſtery of diſſimulation. It is well known, that Lewis the eleventh, for the inſtruction of his ſon, reduced all the Latin language to theſe words only, viz. "Qui neſcit diſſimulare neſcit regnare." It was likewiſe by this practiſe that Saul began his reign, when he was firſt elected, and as yet full of the Spirit of God. The firſt thing we read of him in holy writ is, * that he made as if he did not hear the words which ſeditious people ſpoke againſt him.

Without any thing having been mentioned of Circe, who de-

* Ille vero diſſimulabat ſe audire. Reg. lib. i.

tained

Vain toils! their impious folly dar'd to prey
On herds devoted to the god of day;
The god vindictive doom'd them never more
(Ah men unbleſs'd!) to touch that natal ſhore.

Oh

tained him with her a whole year, and who was famous for the transformation ſhe made of all ſorts of perſons; the reader finds him at firſt with Calypſo the daughter of wiſe Atlas, who bore up the vaſt pillars that reached from earth to heaven, and whoſe knowledge penetrated into the depths of the unfathomable ocean: that is to ſay, who was ignorant of nothing in heaven, earth, or ſea. And as the firſt product and principal part of ſo high, ſo ſolid, and ſo profound a knowledge, was to know how to conceal one's ſelf; this wiſe man called his daughter by a name that ſignified a * ſecret. The poet makes his hero, whom he deſigned for a politician, to ſtay ſeven whole years with this nymph. She taught him ſo well, that afterwards he loſt no opportunity of putting her leſſons in practice: for he does nothing without a diſguiſe. At his parting from Ogygia he is caſt upon the iſle of Phæacia: as kind as his reception was, yet he ſtays till the night before he went off, ere he would diſcover himſelf. From thence he goes to Ithaca: the firſt adventure that happened to him there was with Minerva, the moſt prudent among the deities, as Ulyſſes was the moſt prudent among men. She ſays ſo expreſly in that very paſſage. Nor did they fail to diſguiſe themſelves. Minerva takes upon her the ſhape of a ſhepherd, and Ulyſſes tells her he was obliged to fly from Crete, becauſe he had murdered the ſon of king Idomeneus. The goddeſs diſcovers herſelf firſt, and commends him particularly, becauſe the artifices were ſo eaſy and natural to him, that they ſeemed to be born with him. Afterwards the hero under the form of a beggar deceives firſt of all Eumeus, then his ſon, and laſt of all his wife and every body elſe, till he found an opportunity of puniſhing his enemies, to whom he diſcovered not himſelf till he killed them, namely on the laſt night. After his diſcovering himſelf in the palace, he goes the next day to deceive his father, appearing at firſt under a borrowed name; before he would give him joy of his return. Thus he takes upon him all manner of ſhapes, and diſſembles to the very laſt. But the poet joins to this character

* Καλύπτειν.

Oh ſnatch ſome portion of theſe acts from fate,
Celeſtial muſe! and to our world relate.
Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd;
All who the wars of ten long years ſurviv'd,
And 'ſcap'd the perils of the gulfy main.
Ulyſſes, ſole of all the victor train,
An exile from his dear paternal coaſt,
Deplor'd his abſent queen, and empire loſt.

a valour and a conſtancy, which render him invincible in the moſt daring and deſperate adventures.

Ver. 3. *Who, when his arms had wrought the deſtin'd fall*
Of ſacred Troy———]

Whence is it that Ulyſſes is ſaid to have overthrown Troy? and not Achilles, who was of more remarkable courage than Ulyſſes? Euſtathius tells us, that the deſtruction of Troy ought to be aſcribed chiefly to Ulyſſes, as he not only took away the Palladium, but was the inventor of the ſtratagem of the wooden horſe, by which that city was conquered. Virgil in his ſecond book of the Æneis gives us a noble deſcription of its deſtruction, by which we find that Ulyſſes was not only the contriver of its ruin, but bore a great ſhare in the actions of the night in which that city was overturned.

Ver. 9. *Vain toils! their impious folly*, &c.] By this ſingle trait, Homer makes an eſſential difference between the Iliad and the Odyſſey; namely, that in the former poem the people periſhed by the folly of their kings: In this, the people periſh by their own folly, while their prince omits nothing to procure their felicity. A plain reaſon why the Odyſſey is more calculated for the people, than the Iliad. *Dacier.*

Ver. 15. *Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd.*] It is neceſſary for the better underſtanding of the poem, to fix the period of time from which it takes its beginning: Homer, as Euſtathius obſerves, does not begin with the wanderings of Ulyſſes; he ſteps at once into the latter end of his actions, and leaves the preceding ſtory to be told by way of narration. Thus in his Iliad, he dates his poem from the anger of Achilles, which happened almoſt at the concluſion of the Trojan war. There are but forty-eight days from the departure of Ulyſſes from Calypſo, to his diſcovery in Ithaca; he had been one year with Circe, and ſeven with Calypſo, when the gods diſpatched Mercury to that goddeſs; from which point of time we are to date the Odyſſey.

Calypſo

Calypſo in her caves conſtrain'd his ſtay,
With ſweet, reluctant, amorous delay:
In vain—for now the circling years diſcloſe
The day predeſtin'd to reward his woes.
At length his Ithaca is giv'n by fate,
Where yet new labours his arrival wait;
At length their rage the hoſtile pow'rs reſtrain,
All but the ruthleſs monarch of the main.
But now the god, remote, a heav'nly gueſt,
In Æthiopia grace'd the genial feaſt,

Ver. 21. *Calypſo in her caves conſtrain'd to ſtay.*] To the remark before cited of Boſſu, upon the abode of Ulyſſes with Calypſo, may be added this of the abbé Fraguier: that his reſiding ſeven years in the caves of Calypſo, (the goddeſs of ſecrecy), may only mean that he remained ſo long hid from the knowledge and inquiry of all men; or that whatever befel him in all that time was loſt to hiſtory, or made no part in the poem.

Ver. 28. *All but the ruthleſs monarch of the main.*] It may be aſked, why Neptune is thus enraged againſt Ulyſſes? Homer himſelf tells us, becauſe that hero had put out the eye of his ſon Cyclops. But if we take Neptune by way of allegory for the ocean, the paſſage implies, that the ſufferings of Ulyſſes were chiefly by ſea; and therefore poetry, which adds a grandeur to the meaneſt circumſtance, introduces the god of it as his greateſt enemy. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 30. *In Æthiopia,* &c.] Strabo in his firſt book delivers his opinion, that "the ancient Grecians included all thoſe people who "lived upon the ſouthern ocean, from eaſt to weſt, in the general "name of Æthiopians, and that it was not confined to thoſe only "who lay ſouth of Ægypt." Ptolemy ſays, "that under the Zo-"diac, from eaſt to weſt, inhabit the Æthiopians, black of co-"lour." And elſewhere the ſame geographer divides Æthiopia into the eaſtern and the weſtern. Theſe eaſtern and weſtern Æthiopians were ſeparated by the Arabian or Ægyptian gulf; which though never mentioned by Homer, as Ariſtarchus remarked, yet it is not probable, (ſays Strabo), that he ſhould be ignorant of it, it being but a thouſand ſtadia diſtant from the Mediterranean, when he knew the Ægyptian Thebes, which was four times as far off. *Strab. Plin. Spondan.*

(A race divided, whom with ſloping rays
The riſing and deſcending ſun ſurveys),
There on the world's extremeſt verge, rever'd
With hecatombs and pray'r in pomp prefer'd,
Diſtant he lay: while in the bright abodes
Of high Olympus, Jove conven'd the gods:
Th' aſſembly thus the Sire ſupreme addreſt,
Ægyſthus' fate revolving in his breaſt,
Whom young Oreſtes to the dreary coaſt
Of Pluto ſent, a blood-polluted ghoſt.

Perverſe mankind! whoſe wills created free,
Charge all their woes on abſolute decree;
All to the dooming gods their guilt tranſlate,
And follies are miſcall'd the crimes of fate.
When to his luſt Ægyſthus gave the rein,
Did fate, or we, th' adult'rous act conſtrain?
Did fate, or we, when great Atrides dy'd,
Urge the bold traitor to the regicide?
Hermes I ſent, while yet his ſoul remain'd
Sincere from royal blood, and faith profan'd;

To

Ver. 41. *Jupiter's ſpeech.*] The ſolemnity and ſententiouſneſs of this ſpeech is taken notice of by Euſtathius; and ſurely poetry muſt be highly valuable, when it delivers ſuch excellent inſtructions. It contained the whole of religion among the ancients; and made philoſophy more agreeable. This paſſage is an inſtance of it, a paſſage worthy of a Chriſtian; it ſhews us that the Supreme Being is ſovereignly good; that he rewards the juſt, and puniſhes the unjuſt; and that the folly of man, and not the decree of heaven, is the cauſe of human calamity.

Ver 49. *Hermes I ſent,* &c.] It would be endleſs to obſerve every moral paſſage in the Odyſſey, the whole of it being but one leſſon of morality. But ſurely it muſt be a pleaſure to the reader to learn what notions the ancients had of a deity, from the oldeſt book extant, except the book of Moſes.

Jupiter here declares, that he never fails to warn mankind from evil, and that he had ſent Mercury for this purpoſe to Ægyſthus. It may be aſked what is this Mercury whom Jupiter ſends? It is

the

To warn the wretch, that young Oreſtes, grown
To manly years, ſhould re-aſſert the throne.
Yet impotent of mind, and uncontroll'd,
He plunge'd into the gulf which heav'n foretold.
Here paus'd the god; and penſive thus replies
Minerva, graceful with her azure eyes.
O thou! from whom the whole creation ſprings,
The ſource of pow'r on earth deriv'd to kings!
His death was equal to the direful deed;
So may the man of blood be doom'd to bleed!
But grief and rage alternate wound my breaſt
For brave Ulyſſes, ſtill by fate oppreſt.
Amidſt an iſle, around whoſe rocky ſhore
The foreſts murmur, and the ſurges roar,
The blameleſs hero from his wiſh'd-for home
A goddeſs guards in her inchanted dome.
(Atlas her ſire, to whoſe far-piercing eye
The wonders of the deep expanded lie;
Th' eternal columns which on earth he rears
End in the ſtarry vault, and prop the ſpheres).
By his fair daughter is the chief confin'd,
Who ſoothes to dear delight his anxious mind:

the light of nature, which heaven implants in the breaſt of every man: and which, as Cicero ſays, is not only more ancient than the world, but co-eval with the Maſter of the world himſelf. He writes to this effect: "There was from the beginning ſuch a "thing as reaſon, a direct emanation from nature itſelf, which "prompted to good, and averted from evil. A reaſon which did "not then become a law, when it was firſt reduced to writing, but "was ſo even from the moment it exiſted, and it exiſted from ever, "of an equal date with the divine intelligence: it is the true and "primordial law, proper to command and to forbid, it is the rea-"ſon of the great Jupiter." *Dacier.*

Ver. 63. *Amidſt an iſle, &c.*] There was, according to true hiſtory, ſuch an iſland of Calypſo, of which Strabo writes; that Solon gives an account of the iſland Atlantis bordering upon Ægypt, and that he went thither to make enquiry, and learned that an iſland was once there, but by time was vaniſhed. *Euſtathius.*

Succeſsleſs

Succeſsleſs all her ſoft careſſes prove,
To baniſh from his breaſt his country's love;
To ſee the ſmoke from his lov'd palace riſe,
While the dear iſle in diſtant proſpect lies,
With what contentment could he cloſe his eyes?
And will Omnipotence neglect to ſave
The ſuffering virtue of the wiſe and brave?
Muſt he, whoſe altars on the Phrygian ſhore
With frequent rites, and pure, avow'd thy pow'r,
Be doom'd the worſt of human ills to prove,
Unbleſs'd, abandon'd to the wrath of Jove?
Daughter! what words have paſs'd thy lips unweigh'd?
(Reply'd the Thund'rer to the martial maid),
Deem not unjuſtly by my doom oppreſt
Of human race the wiſeſt and the beſt.
Neptune, by pray'r repentant rarely won,
Afflicts the chief, t' avenge his giant-ſon,

Whoſe

Ver. 75. *To ſee the ſmoke from his lov'd palace riſe.*] There is an agreeable tenderneſs in this image, and nothing can better paint the ardent deſire a man naturally has to review his native country after a long abſence. This is ſtill ſtronger than that which Cicero extols in ſeveral places of his works, that Ulyſſes preferred the ſight of Ithaca to the immortality proffered him by Calypſo. He here deſires to purchaſe, at the price of his life, the pleaſure, not of returning to his country, but even of ſeeing at a diſtance the very ſmoke of it. *Dacier.*

Ver. 84. *Daughter! what words,* &c.] This verſe is frequently repeated both in the Iliad and the Odyſſey; it has here a particular energy. Jupiter reproves Minerva for ſuppoſing he could ever be unmindful of an hero ſo pious as Ulyſſes. It is ſpoken with vehemence; an inſtance, ſays Euſtathius, that it is not only equitable, but an attribute of divinity, for rulers to remember thoſe who ſerve them faithfully.

Ver. 89. *T' avenge his giant-ſon.*] It is artful in the poet to tell the reader the occaſion of the ſufferings of Ulyſſes in the opening of the poem; it is a juſtice due to his character, to ſhew that his mis-

Whoſe viſual orb Ulyſſes robb'd of light;
Great Polypheme, of more than mortal might!
Him young Thoöſa bore, (the bright increaſe
Of Phorcys, dreaded in the ſounds and ſeas:)
Whom Neptune ey'd with bloom of beauty bleſt,
And in his cave the yielding nymph compreſt.
For this, the god conſtrains the Greek to roam,
A hopeleſs exile from his native home,
From death alone exempt—but ceaſe to mourn;
Let all combine t' atchieve his wiſh'd return:
Neptune aton'd, his wrath ſhall now refrain,
Or thwart the ſynod of the gods in vain.
  Father and king ador'd! Minerva cry'd,
Since all who in th' Olympian bow'r reſide
Now make the wand'ring Greek their public care,
Let Hermes to th' * Atlantic iſle repair;
Bid him, arriv'd in bright Calypſo's court,
The ſanction of th' aſſembled pow'rs report:
That wiſe Ulyſſes to his native land
Muſt ſpeed, obedient to their high command.
Meantime Telemachus, the blooming heir
Of ſea-girt Ithaca, demands my care:
'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years,
In ſage debates; ſurrounded with his peers,

fortunes are not the conſequence of his crimes, but the effect of Neptune's anger.

* Ogygia.

Ver. 112. *'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years,* &c.] In this the poet draws the out-lines of what he is to fill up in the four ſubſequent books: and nothing can give us a greater idea of his unbounded invention, than his building upon ſo plain a foundation ſuch a noble ſuperſtructure: he entertains us with variety of epiſodes, hiſtorical relations, and manners of thoſe ancient times: it muſt be confeſſed, that the characters in the Odyſſey, and the number of the chief actors, are but few; and yet the poet never tires: he varies and diverſifies the ſtory ſo happily, that he is continually opening new ſcenes to engage our attention. He reſembles his own Proteus, he is capable of all ſhapes, yet in all ſhapes the ſame deity.

To ſave the ſtate, and timely to reſtrain
The bold intruſion of the ſuitor-train;
Who croud his palace, and with lawleſs pow'r
His herds and flocks in feaſtful rites devour.
To diſtant Sparta, and the ſpacious waſte
Of ſandy Pyle, the royal youth ſhall haſte.
There, warm with filial love, the cauſe inquire
That from his realm retards his god-like ſire:
Deliv'ring early to the voice of fame
The promiſe of a great, immortal name.
She ſaid: the ſandals of celeſtial mold
Fledg'd with ambroſial plumes, and rich with gold,
Surround her feet; with theſe ſublime ſhe ſails
Th' aerial ſpace, and mounts the winged gales:
O'er earth and ocean wide prepar'd to ſoar,
Her dreaded arm a beamy jav'lin bore,
Pond'rous and vaſt; which, when her fury burns,
Proud tyrants humbles, and whole hoſts o'erturns.

Ver. 118. *To diſtant Sparta, and the ſpacious waſte*
Of ſandy Pyle——]

Rapin is very ſevere upon this conduct. When Telemachus, ſays he, is to ſearch for his father in the courts of Greece, he cannot make the leaſt progreſs without Minerva; it is ſhe who inſpires his thoughts, and aſſiſts in the execution. Could not hunour, duty, or nature, have moved his heart towards an abſent father? The machine, adds he, has not the leaſt appearance of probability, inaſmuch as the goddeſs conducts him to every place, except only where Ulyſſes reſides; of which ſhe ought by no means to be ignorant, upon the account of her divinity.

But ſurely nothing can be more natural, than for a ſon, in order to gain intelligence of an abſent father, to inquire in thoſe places, and of thoſe perſons, where and from whom he is moſt likely to have information. Such is the conduct of Telemachus: and poetry, which delights in the wonderful, becauſe this conduct agrees with wiſdom, aſcribes it to Minerva the goddeſs of it.

From

From high Olympus prone her flight ſhe bends,
And in the realm of Ithaca deſcends.
Her lineaments divine, the grave diſguiſe
Of Mentes' form conceal'd from human eyes:
(Mentes, the monarch of the Taphian land,)
A glitt'ring ſpear wav'd awful in her hand.
There in the portal place'd, the heav'n-born maid
Enormous riot and miſ-rule ſurvey'd.
On hides of beeves, before the palace-gate,
(Sad ſpoils of luxury), the ſuitors ſat.
With rival art, and ardour in their mien,
At cheſs they vie, to captivate the queen;
Divining

Ver. 136. *Mentes, the monarch of the Taphian land.*] We are told by tradition, that Homer was ſo ſenſible of friendſhip, that, to do honour to his particular friends, he immortaliſed their names in his poems. In the Iliad he has ſhewn his gratitude to Tychius; and in the Odyſſey, to Mentes, Phemius, and Mentor. This Mentes was a famous merchant of the iſle of Leucade, who received Homer at Smyrna, and made him his companion in all his voyages. It is to this Mentes we owe the two poems of Homer; for the poet in all probability had never wrote them without thoſe lights and informations he received, and the diſcoveries he was enabled to make, by thoſe travels. Homer is not contented to give his name to the king of the Taphians, but feigns alſo that the goddeſs of wiſdom choſe to appear in his ſhape preferably to that of all the kings who were nearer neighbours to Ithaca. Euſtathius thinks there might have been a real king of Taphos of this name, who was a friend to Ulyſſes. This may poſſibly be; but I would chuſe to adhere rather to the old tradition, as it does honour to friendſhip. *Dacier.*

Ver. 139. *Enormous riot and miſ-rule.*] This is the firſt appearance of the ſuitors; and the poet has drawn their pictures in ſuch colours, as are agreeable to their characters through the whole poem.

Ver. 143. *At cheſs they vie, to captivate the queen;*
Divining of their loves ———]
There are great diſputes what this game was, at which the ſuitors played. Athenæus relates it from Apian the grammarian, who

Divining of their loves. Attending nigh,
A menial train the flowing bowl ſupply:
Others, apart, the ſpacious hall prepare,
And form the coſtly feaſt with buſy care.
There young Telemachus, his bloomy face
Glowing celeſtial ſweet, with godlike grace
Amid the circle ſhines: but hope and fear
(Painful viciſſitude! his boſom tear.
Now image'd in his mind, he ſees reſtor'd
In peace and joy, the people's rightful lord;
The proud oppreſſors fly the vengeful ſword.
While his fond ſoul theſe fancied triumphs ſwell'd;
The ſtranger gueſt, the royal youth beheld:
Griev'd that a viſitant ſo long ſhould wait
Unmark'd, unhonour'd, at a monarch's gate;
Inſtant he flew with hoſpitable haſte,
And the new friend with courteous air embrace'd.

had it from Cteſon a native of Ithaca, that the ſport was in this manner. The number of the ſuitors being one hundred and eight, they equally divided their men or balls; that is to ſay, fifty-four on each ſide; theſe were placed on the board oppoſite to each other. Between the two ſides was a vacant ſpace, in the midſt of which was the main mark, or queen, the point which all were to aim at. They took their turns by lot; he who took or diſplaced that mark, got his own in its place; and if by a ſecond man, he again took it, without touching any of the others, he won the game; and it paſſed as an omen of obtaining his miſtreſs. This principal mark, or queen, was called by whatever name the gameſters pleaſed; and the ſuitors gave it the name of *Penelope*.

Ver. 157. *Griev'd that a viſitant ſo long ſhould wait.*] The reader will loſe much of the pleaſure of this poem, if he reads it without the reflection, that he peruſes one of the moſt ancient books in the world; it ſets before him perſons, places, and actions, that exiſted three thouſand years ago: here we have an inſtance of the humanity of thoſe early ages: Telemachus pays a reverence to this ſtranger, only becauſe he is a ſtranger? he attends him in perſon, and welcomes him with all the openneſs of ancient hoſpitality.

Stranger!

Stranger! whoe'er thou art, ſecurely reſt,
Affiance'd in my faith, a friendly gueſt:
Approach the dome, the ſocial banquet ſhare,
And then the purpoſe of thy ſoul declare.
Thus affable and mild, the prince precedes,
And to the dome th' unknown celeſtial leads.
The ſpear receiving from her hand, he place'd
Againſt a column, fair with ſculpture grace'd;
Where ſeemly range'd in peaceful order ſtood
Ulyſſes' arms, now long diſus'd to blood.
He led the goddeſs to the ſov'reign ſeat,
Her feet ſupported with a ſtool of ſtate;
(A purple carpet ſpread the pavement wide,)
Then drew his ſeat, familiar, to her ſide;
Far from the ſuitor-train, a brutal croud,
With inſolence, and wine, elate and loud:
Where the free gueſt, unnoted, might relate,
If haply conſcious, of his father's fate.
The golden ew'r a maid obſequious brings,
Repleniſh'd from the cool, tranſlucent ſprings;
With copious water, the bright vaſe ſupplies
A ſilver laver, of capacious ſize:
They waſh. The tables in fair order ſpread,
They heap the glitt'ring caniſters with bread:
Viands of various kinds allure the taſte,
Of choiceſt ſort and ſavour, rich repaſt!
Delicious wines th' attending herald brought;
The gold gave luſtre to the purple draught.

Ver. 185, &c. *The feaſt deſcrib'd.*] There is nothing that has drawn more ridicule upon Homer, than the frequent deſcriptions of his entertainments: it has been judged, that he was more than ordinarily delighted with them, ſince he omits no opportunity to deſcribe them; nay his temperance has not been unſuſpected. But we muſt not condemn without ſtronger evidence: a man may commend a ſumptuous entertainment, or good wines, without being either a drunkard or a glutton.

Lur'd with the vapour of the fragrant feaſt,
In ruſh'd the ſuitors with voracious haſte:
Marſhall'd in order due, to each a ſew'r
Preſents, to bathe his hands, a radiant ew'r.
Luxurious then they feaſt. Obſervant round
Gay ſtripling youths the brimming goblets crown'd.
The rage of hunger quell'd, they all advance,
And form to meaſur'd airs the mazy dance:
To Phemius was conſign'd the chorded lyre,
Whoſe hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire:
Phemius, whoſe voice divine could ſweeteſt ſing
High ſtrains, reſponſive to the vocal ſtring.
Meanwhile, in whiſpers to his heav'nly gueſt
His indignation thus the prince expreſt.
Indulge my riſing grief, whilſt theſe (my friend)
With ſong and dance the pompous revel end.
Light is the dance, and doubly ſweet the lays,
When, for the dear delight, another pays.
His treaſur'd ſtores theſe cormorants conſume,
Whoſe bones, defrauded of a regal tomb
And common turf, lie naked on the plain,
Or doom'd to welter in the whelming main.

Ver. 197. *To Phemius was conſign'd the chorded lyre.*] In ancient times, princes entertained in their families certain learned and wiſe men, who were both poets and philoſophers, and not only made it their buſineſs to amuſe and delight, but to promote wiſdom and morality. Ulyſſes, at his departure for Troy, left one of theſe with Penelope: and it was uſual to conſign in this manner, the caſe of their wives and families to the poets of thoſe days, as appears from a ſignal paſſage in the third book, verſe (of the original) 267, &c. To this man Homer gives the name of Phemius; to celebrate one of his friends, who was ſo called, and who had been his preceptor, (ſays Euſtathius). I muſt add one remark, that, though he places his maſter here in no very good company, yet he guards his character from any imputation, by telling us, that he attended the ſuitors by compulſion. This is not only a great inſtance of his gratitude, but alſo of his tenderneſs and delicacy.

Should

Should he return, that troop ſo blithe and bold,
With purple robes inwrought, and ſtiff with gold,
Precipitant in fear, would wing their flight,
And curſe their cumb'rous pride's unwieldy weight.
But ah I dream!—th' appointed hour is fled,
And hope, too long with vain deluſion fed,
Deaf to the rumour of fallacious fame,
Gives to the roll of death his glorious name!
With venial freedom let me now demand
Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land:
Sincere, from whence began thy courſe, recite,
And to what ſhip I owe the friendly freight?
Now firſt to me this viſit doſt thou deign,
Or number'd in my father's ſocial train?
All who deſerv'd his choice, he made his own,
And curious much to know, he far was known.
My birth I boaſt (the blue-ey'd virgin cries,)
From great Anchialus, renown'd and wiſe:
Mentes my name; I rule the Taphian race,
Whoſe bounds the deep circumfluent waves embrace:
A duteous people, and induſtrious iſle,
To naval arts inur'd, and ſtormy toil.
Freighted with iron from my native land,
I ſteer my voyage to the Brutian ſtrand;

Ver. 225. *All who deſerv'd his choice*——] It is evident from this and many other places in the Odyſſey, that hoſpitality was hereditary; an happineſs and honour peculiar to thoſe heroic ages. And ſurely nothing can ſet the character of Ulyſſes in a more agreeable point of light, than what Telemachus here declares of it: "He was the friend of all mankind."

Ver. 234. *I ſteer my voyage to the Brutian ſtrand.*] In the country of the Brutians, in the lower part of Italy, was a town called Temeſe. That Homer here meant this city, and not one of the ſame name in Cyprus, appears not only becauſe this was famous for works of braſs, but becauſe (as Strabo obſerves,) Ithaca lay in the direct way from Taphos to this city of the Brutii; whereas it was conſiderably out of the way to paſs by Ithaca to that of Cyprus.

To

To gain by commerce, for the labour'd maſs,
A juſt proportion of refulgent braſs.
Far from your capital my ſhip reſides
At Reithrus, and ſecure at anchor rides;
Where waving groves on aery Neion grow,
Supremely tall, and ſhade the deeps below.
Thence to reviſit your imperial dome,
An old hereditary gueſt I come:
Your father's friend. Laertes can relate
Our faith unſpotted, and its early date;
Who preſt with heart corroding grief and years,
To the gay court a rural ſhed prefers,
Where ſole of all his train, a matron ſage
Supports with homely food his drooping age,
With feeble ſteps from marſhalling his vines
Returning ſad, when toilſome day declines.
With friendly ſpeed, induce'd by erring fame,
To hail Ulyſſes' ſafe return I came:
But ſtill the frown of ſome celeſtial pow'r
With envious joy retards the bliſsful hour.
Let not your ſoul be ſunk in ſad deſpair;
He lives, he breathes this heav'nly vital air,
Among a ſavage race, whoſe ſhelfy bounds
With ceaſeleſs roar the foaming deep ſurrounds.

The

Ver. 245. *Laertes's retirement.*] This moſt beautiful paſſage of Laertes has not eſcaped the cenſure of the critics: they ſay he acts an unmanly part, he forgets that he is a king, and reduces himſelf unworthily into the condition of a ſervant. Euſtathius gives two reaſons for his retirement, which anſwer thoſe objections; the firſt is, that he could not endure to ſee the outrage and inſolence of the ſuitors; the ſecond, that his grief for Ulyſſes makes him abandon ſociety, and prefer his vineyard to his court. This is undoubtedly the picture of human nature under affliction; for ſorrow loves ſolitude.

Ver. 257. *Among a ſavage race, &c.*] It is the obſervation of Euſtathius, that what Minerva here delivers bears reſemblance to the oracles,

The thoughts which roll within my raviſh'd breaſt,
To me, no ſeer, th' inſpiring gods ſuggeſt;
Nor ſkill'd, nor ſtudious, with prophetic eye
To judge the winged omens of the ſky.
Yet hear this certain ſpeech, nor deem it vain;
Tho' adamantine bonds the chief reſtrain,
The dire reſtraint his wiſdom will defeat,
And ſoon reſtore him to his regal ſeat.
But, gen'rous youth! ſincere and free declare,
Are you, of manly growth, his royal heir?
For ſure Ulyſſes in your look appears,
The ſame his features, if the ſame his years.
Such was that face, on which I dwelt with joy
Ere Greece aſſembled ſtemm'd the tides to Troy;
But parting then for that deteſted ſhore,
Our eyes unhappy! never greeted more.
To prove a genuine birth (the prince replies,)
On female truth aſſenting faith relies;
Thus manifeſt of right, I build my claim
Sure-founded on a fair maternal fame,
Ulyſſes' ſon: but happier he, whom fate
Hath place'd beneath the ſtorms which toſs the great!
Happier the ſon, whoſe hoary ſire is bleſt
With humble affluence, and domeſtic reſt!

oracles, in which part is falſe, and part true: that Ulyſſes is detained in an iſland, is truth; that he is detained by Barbarians, a falſhood: this is done by the goddeſs, that ſhe may be thought to be really a man, as ſhe appears to be; ſhe ſpeaks with the dubiouſneſs of a man, not the certainty of a goddeſs; ſhe raiſes his expectation by ſhewing ſhe has an inſight into futurity; and, to engage his belief, ſhe diſcovers in part the truth to Telemachus. Neither was it neceſſary or convenient for Telemachus to know the whole truth: for if he had known that Ulyſſes inhabited a deſert, detained by a goddeſs, he muſt of conſequence have known of his return, (for he that could certify the one, could certify the other,) and ſo had never gone in ſearch of him; and it would hence have happened, that Homer had been deprived of giving us thoſe graces of poetry which ariſe from the voyage of Telemachus.

Happier

Happier than I, to future empire born,
But doom'd a father's wretched fate to mourn!
To whom, with aſpect mild, the gueſt divine.
Oh true deſcendant of a ſcepter'd line!
The gods, a glorious fate from anguiſh free
To chaſte Penelope's increaſe decree.
But ſay, yon jovial troop ſo gaily dreſt,
Is this a bridal or a friendly feaſt!
Or from their deed I rightlier may divine,
Unſeemly flown with inſolence and wine;
Unwelcome revellers, whoſe lawleſs joy
Pains the ſage ear, and hurts the ſober eye?
Magnificence of old (the prince reply'd,)
Beneath our roof with virtue could reſide;
Unblam'd abundance crown'd the royal board,
What time this dome rever'd her prudent lord;
Who now (ſo heav'n decrees,) is doom'd to mourn,
Bitter conſtraint! erroneous and forlorn.
Better the chief, on Ilion's hoſtile plain,
Had fall'n ſurrounded with his warlike train;
Or ſafe return'd, the race of glory paſt,
New to his friends embrace, had breath'd his laſt!
Then grateful Greece with ſtreaming eyes would raiſe
Hiſtoric marbles, to record his praiſe;
His praiſe, eternal on the faithful ſtone,
Had with tranſmiſſive honour grace'd his ſon.
Now ſnatch'd by harpies to the dreary coaſt,
Sunk is the hero, and his glory loſt:
Vaniſh'd at once! unheard-of, and unknown!
And I his heir in miſery alone.

Ver. 309. *Now ſnatch'd by harpies,* &c.] The meaning of this expreſſion is, that Ulyſſes has not had the rites of ſepulture. This among the ancients was eſteemed the greateſt of calamities, as it hindered the ſhades of the deceaſed from entering into the ſtate of the happy.

Nor

Nor for a dear, loſt father only flow
The filial tears, but woe ſucceeds to woe:
To tempt the ſpouſeleſs queen with am'rous wiles,
Reſort the nobles from the neighb'ring iſles;
From Samos, circled with th' Ionian main,
Dulychium, and Zacynthus' ſilvan reign:
Ev'n with preſumptuous hope her bed t' aſcend,
The lords of Ithaca their right pretend.
She ſeems attentive to their pleaded vows.
Her heart deteſting what her ear allows.
They, vain expectants of the bridal hour,
My ſtores in riotous expence devour,
In feaſt and dance the mirthful months employ,
And meditate my doom, to crown their joy.
With tender pity touch'd, the goddeſs cry'd!
Soon may kind heav'n a ſure relief provide,
Soon may your ſire diſcharge the vengeance due,
And all your wrongs the proud oppreſſors rue!
Oh! in that portal ſhould the chief appear,
Each hand tremendous with a brazen ſpear,
In radiant panoply his limbs incas'd;
(For ſo of old my father's court he grace'd,

Ver. 315. *To tempt the ſpouſeleſs queen——Reſort the nobles.*] It is neceſſary to reconcile the conduct of the ſuitors to probability, ſince it has ſo great a ſhare in the proceſs of the Odyſſey. It may ſeem incredible that Penelope, who is a queen, in whom the ſupreme power is lodged, ſhould not diſmiſs ſuch unwelcome intruders, eſpecially ſince many of them were her own ſubjects: beſides, it ſeems an extraordinary way of courtſhip in them, to ruin the perſon to whom they make their addreſſes.

To ſolve this objection, we muſt conſider the nature of the Grecian governments: the chief men of the land had great authority: though the government was monarchical, it was not deſpotic: Laertes was retired, and diſabled with age; Telemachus was yet in his minority; and the fear of any violence either againſt her own perſon, or againſt her ſon, might deter Penelope from uſing any endeavours to remove men of ſuch inſolence, and ſuch power. *Dacier.*

When

When ſocial mirth unbent his ſerious ſoul,
O'er the full banquet, and the ſprightly bowl)
He then from Ephyre, the fair domain
Of Ilus, ſprung from Jaſon's royal train,
Meaſur'd a length of ſeas, a toilſome length, in vain.
For voyaging to learn the direful art
To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart;
Obſervant of the gods, and ſternly juſt,
Ilus refus'd t' impart the baneful truſt:
With friendlier zeal my father's ſoul was fir'd,
The drugs he knew, and gave the boon deſir'd.
Appear'd he now with ſuch heroic port,
As then conſpicuous at the Taphian court;
Soon ſhould yon boaſters ceaſe their haughty ſtrife,
Or each atone his guilty love with life.
But of his wiſh'd return the care reſign;
Be future vengeance to the pow'rs divine.
My ſentence hear; with ſtern diſtaſte avow'd,
To their own diſtricts drive the ſuitor-croud:
When next the morning warms the purple eaſt.
Convoke the peerage, and the gods atteſt;
The ſorrows of your inmoſt ſoul relate;
And form ſure plans to ſave the ſinking ſtate.
Should ſecond love a pleaſing flame inſpire,
And the chaſte queen connubial rites require;
Diſmiſs'd with honour, let her hence repair
To great Icarius, whoſe paternal care
Will guide her paſſion, and reward her choice
With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.
Then let this dictate of my love prevail:
Inſtant, to foreign realms prepare to ſail,
To learn your father's fortunes: fame may prove,
Or omen'd voice, (the meſſenger of Jove,)
Propitious to the ſearch. Direct your toil
Thro' the wide ocean firſt to ſandy Pyle;

Of

Of Neſtor, hoary ſage, his doom demand:
Thence ſpeed your voyage to the Spartan ſtrand;
For young Atrides to th' Achaian coaſt
Arriv'd the laſt of all the victor hoſt.
If yet Ulyſſes views the light; forbear,
'Till the fleet hours reſtore the circling year.
But if his ſoul hath wing'd the deſtin'd flight,
Inhabitant of deep diſaſtrous night;
Homeward with pious ſpeed repaſs the main,
To the pale ſhade funereal rites ordain,
Plant the fair column o'er the vacant grave,
A hero's honours let the hero have.
With decent grief the royal dead deplor'd,
For the chaſte queen ſelect an equal lord.
Then let revenge your daring mind employ,
By fraud or force the ſuitor train deſtroy,
And ſtarting into manhood, ſcorn the boy.
Haſt thou not heard how young Oreſtes fir'd
With great revenge, immortal praiſe acquir'd?
His virgin-ſword, Ægyſthus' veins imbru'd;
The murd'rer fell, and blood aton'd for blood.
O greatly bleſs'd with every blooming grace!
With equal ſteps the paths of glory trace;
Join to that royal youth's your rival name,
And ſhine eternal in the ſphere of fame,——

Ver. 387. *Haſt thou not heard*, &c.] It may ſeems that this example of Oreſtes does not come fully up to the purpoſe intended: there is a wide difference in the circumſtances: Oreſtes ſlew an adulterer, and a ſingle perſon, with an adultereſs. The deſigns of Telemachus are not againſt one, but many enemies; neither are they adulterers, nor have they ſlain the father of Telemachus, as is the caſe of Oreſtes: nor is Penelope an adultereſs. The intent therefore of the goddeſs is only to ſhew what a glorious act it is to defend our parents. Oreſtes, ſays Mentes, is every where celebrated for honouring his father, and thou ſhalt obtain equal honour by defending thy mother.

But my aſſociates now my ſtay deplore,
Impatient on the hoarſe-reſounding ſhore.
Thou, heedful of advice, ſecure proceed;
My praiſe the precept is, be thine the deed.
The counſel of my friend (the youth rejoin'd)
Imprints conviction on my grateful mind.
So fathers ſpeak (perſuaſive ſpeech and mild)
Their ſage experience to the fav'rite child.
But, ſince to part, for ſweet refection due
The genial viands let my train renew:
And the rich pledge of plighted faith receive,
Worthy the heir of Ithaca to give.
Defer the promis'd boon (the gooddeſs cries
Celeſtial azure bright'ning in her eyes)
And let me now regain the Reithrian port:
From Temeſé return'd, your royal court
I ſhall reviſit; and that pledge receive;
And gifts, memorial of our friendſhip, leave.
Abrupt, with eagle-ſpeed ſhe cut the ſky;
Inſtant inviſible to mortal eye.
Then firſt he recogniz'd th' aetherial gueſt;
Wonder and joy alternate fire his breaſt:
Heroic thoughts, infus'd, his heart dilate:
Revolving much his father's doubtful fate,
At length, compos'd, he join'd the ſuitor-throng;
Huſh'd in attention to the warbled ſong.

His

Ver. 420. *Huſh'd in attention to the warbled ſong.*] There may be two reaſons why this is inſerted; either the ſuitors were pleaſed with the ſweetneſs of the ſong, or the ſubject of it; they ſat attentive to hear the death of Ulyſſes, in the proceſs of his ſtory. This gives us a reaſon why immediately Penelope deſcended to ſtop the ſong; ſhe feared leſt he might touch upon the ſtory of Ulyſſes, and ſay that he died in his return. This would have reduced her to the utmoſt neceſſity, and ſhe could not have deferred to marry. Phemius would have certainly found credit, for poets were

His tender theme the charming lyriſt choſe
Minerva's anger, and the direful woes
Which voyaging from Troy the victors bore,
While ſtorms vindictive intercept the ſhore.
The ſhrilling airs the vaulted roof rebounds,
Reflecting to the queen the ſilver ſounds.
With grief renew'd the weeping fair deſcends;
Their ſov'reign's ſtep a virgin train attends:
A veil of richeſt texture wrought, ſhe wears,
And ſilent to the joyous hall repairs.
There from the portal, with her mild command
Thus gently checks the minſtrels tuneful hand.
Phemius! let acts of gods, and heroes old,
What ancient bards in hall and bow'r have told,
Attemper'd to the lyre, your voice employ;
Such the pleas'd ear will drink with ſilent joy.
But oh! forbear that dear, diſaſtrous name,
To ſorrow ſacred, and ſecure of fame:
My bleeding boſom ſickens at the ſound,
And ev'ry piercing note inflicts a wound.
Why, deareſt object of my duteous love,
(Reply'd the prince) will you the bard reprove?
Oft', Jove's ætherial rays (reſiſtleſs fire)
The chanter's ſoul and raptur'd ſong inſpire;

were believed to be inſpired by the gods; they were looked upon as prophets, and to have ſomething of divinity in them, as appears from Demodocus in the eighth book of the Odyſſey.

Ver. 443. *Oft', Jove's ætherial rays*, &c.] Telemachus here reproves his mother for commanding Phemius to deſiſt, or not to make Ulyſſes the ſubject of his ſong; by ſaying, that it was not in the poet's own power to chuſe his ſubject, which was frequently dictated and inſpired by the gods. This is a particular inſtance of the opinion the ancients held as to the immediate inſpiration of their poets. The words in the original evidently bear this ſenſe. "If the ſubject diſpleaſe you, it is not the poet, but Jupiter is "to blame, who inſpires men of invention, as he himſelf pleaſes."

Inſtinct divine! nor blame ſevere his choice,
Warbling the Grecian woes with harp and voice:
For novel lays attract our raviſh'd ears;
But old, the mind with inattention hears;
Patient permit the ſadly-pleaſing ſtrain;
Familiar now with grief, your tears refrain,
And in the public woe forget your own;
You weep not for a periſh'd lord, alone.
What Greeks, now wand'ring in the Stygian gloom,
With your Ulyſſes ſhar'd an equal doom!
Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil
And various labours of the loom, beguile;
There rule, from palace-cares remote and free,
That care to man belongs, and moſt to me.
  Mature beyond his years, the queen admires
His ſage reply, and with her train retires.
Then ſwelling ſorrows burſt their former bounds,
With echoing grief afreſh the dome reſounds;
'Till Pallas, piteous of her plaintive cries,
In ſlumber clos'd her ſilver-ſtreaming eyes.
  Meantime, rekindl'd at the royal charms,
Tumultuous love each beating boſom warms;
Intemp'rate rage a wordy war began;
But bold Telemachus aſſum'd the man.
Inſtant (he cry'd) your female diſcord end,
Ye deedleſs boaſters! and the ſong attend;
Obey that ſweet compulſion, nor profane
With diſſonance the ſmooth melodious ſtrain.
Pacific now prolong the jovial feaſt;
But when the dawn reveals the roſy eaſt,
I, to the peers aſſembled, ſhall propoſe
The firm reſolve, I here in few diſcloſe.
No longer live the cankers of my court;
All to your ſeveral ſtates with ſpeed reſort;
Waſte in wild riot what your land allows,
There ply the early feaſt, and late carouſe.

But

But if, to honour loſt, 'tis ſtill decreed
For you my bowl ſhall flow, my flock ſhall bleed;
Judge and revenge my right, impartial Jove!——
By him and all th' immortal thrones above,
(A ſacred oath) each proud oppreſſor, ſlain,
Shall with inglorious gore this marble ſtain.
Aw'd by the prince, thus haughty, bold, and young,
Rage gnaw'd the lip, and wonder chain'd the tongue.
Silence at length the gay Antinous broke,
Conſtrain'd a ſmile, and thus ambiguous ſpoke.
What god to your untutor'd youth affords
This headlong torrent of amazing words?

May

Ver. 491. *The ſpeech of Antinous.*] Antinous and Eurymachus are Ithacenſians, and are called the chief of the ſuitors. It is therefore neceſſary to diſtinguiſh their characters; Antinous is violent, and determined againſt Ulyſſes; Eurymachus more gentle and ſubtle; Antinous derides, Eurymachus flatters.

This ſpeech of Antinous is a concealed raillery; he tells Telemachus, that Joves inſpires his ſoul with wiſdom, but means that his education has been ſuch, that he had learned nothing from man; he wiſhes (out of a ſeemingly kind concern for him) that he may never reign in Ithaca, becauſe the weight of a crown is a burden; and concludes with mentioning his hereditary title to it, to inſinuate that it is his by deſcent only, and not by merit.

Telemachus, in his anſwer, wiſely diſſembles the affront of Antinous, he takes it in the better ſenſe, and ſeems to differ only in opinion about the regality. Think you, ſays he, that to be a king is to be miſerable? To be a king, in my judgment, is to enjoy affluence and honour. He aſſerts his claim to the ſucceſſion of his father, yet ſeems to decline it, to lay the ſuſpicions of the ſuitors aſleep, that they may not prevent the meaſures he takes to obtain it. Euſtathius.

The ſpeech of Eurymachus confirms the former obſervation, that this ſuitor is of a more ſoft and moderate behaviour than Antinous: he cloaths ill deſigns with a ſeeming humanity, and appears a friend, while he carries on the part of an enemy: Telemachus had ſaid, that if it was the will of Jupiter, he would aſcend the throne of Ithaca: Eurymachus anſwers, that this was

May Jove delay thy reign, and cumber late
So bright a genius with the toils of ſtate!
Thoſe toils (Telemachus ſerene replies)
Have charms, with all their weight, t' allure the wiſe.
Faſt by the throne obſequious fame reſides,
And wealth inceſſant rolls her golden tides.
Nor let Antinous rage, if ſtrong deſire
Of wealth and fame a youthful boſom fire:
Elect by Jove his delegate of ſway,
With joyous pride the ſummons I'd obey.
Whene'er Ulyſſes roams the realm of night,
Shou'd factious pow'r diſpute my lineal right,
Some other Greeks a fairer claim may plead;
To your pretence their title would precede.
At leaſt, the ſcepter loſt, I ſtill ſhou'd reign
Sole o'er my vaſſals, and domeſtic train.
To this Eurymachus. To heav'n alone
Refer the choice to fill the vacant throne.
Your patrimonial ſtores in peace poſſeſs;
Undoubted all your filial claim confeſs:
Your private right ſhou'd impious pow'r invade,
The peers of Ithaca wou'd arm in aid.
But ſay, that ſtranger-gueſt who late withdrew,
What and from whence? his name and lineage ſhew.
His grave demeanour, and majeſtic grace
Speak him deſcended of no vulgar race:
Did he ſome loan of antient right require,
Or came fore-runner of your ſcepter'd ſire?

as the gods ſhould determine; an inſinuation that they regarded not his claim from his father. Telemachus ſaid he would maintain himſelf in the poſſeſſion of his preſent inheritance: Eurymachus wiſhes that no one may arrive to diſpoſſeſs him: the latent meaning of which is, "we of your own country are ſufficient "for that deſign." If theſe obſervations of Euſtathius be true, Eurymachus was not a leſs enemy than Antinous, but a better diſſembler.

Oh

Oh ſon of Polybus! the prince replies,
No more my fire will glad theſe longing eyes:
The queen's fond hope inventive rumour cheers,
Or vain diviners' dreams divert her fears.
That ſtranger-gueſt the Taphian realm obeys,
A realm defended with incircling ſeas.
Mentes, an ever-honour'd name, of old
High in Ulyſſes' ſocial liſt inroll'd.
Thus he, tho' conſcious of th' ætherial gueſt,
Anſwer'd evaſive of the ſly requeſt.
Meantime the lyre rejoins the ſprightly lay;
Love-dittied airs, and dance, conclude the day.
But when the ſtar of eve, with golden light
Adorn'd the matron-brow of ſable night;
The mirthful train diſperſing quit the court,
And to their ſeveral domes to reſt reſort.
A tow'ring ſtructure to the palace join'd;
To this his ſteps the thoughtful prince inclin'd;
In his pavilion there, to ſleep repairs;
The lighted torch, the ſage Euryclea bears:
(Daughter of Ops, the juſt Piſenor's ſon,
For twenty beeves by great Laertes won;
In roſy prime with charms attractive grace'd,
Honour'd by him, a gentle lord and chaſte,
With dear eſteem: too wiſe, with jealous ſtrife
To taint the joys of ſweet, connubial life.
Sole with Telemachus her ſervice ends,
A child ſhe nurs'd him, and a man attends.)
Whilſt to his couch himſelf the prince addreſt,
The duteous dame receiv'd the purple veſt:
The purple veſt with decent care diſpos'd,
The ſilver ring ſhe pull'd, the door reclos'd:
The bolt, obedient to the ſilken cord,
To the ſtrong ſtaple's inmoſt depth reſtor'd,
Secur'd the valves. There, wrapt in ſilent ſhade,
Penſive, the rules the goddeſs gave, he weigh'd;

Stretch'd

Stretch'd on the downy fleece, no reſt he knows,
And in his raptur'd ſoul the viſion glows.

Having now gone through the firſt book, I ſhall only obſerve to the reader, that the whole of it does not take up the compaſs of an entire day: when Minerva appears to Telemachus, the ſuitors were preparing to ſit down to the bankquet at noon; and the buſineſs of the firſt book concludes with the day. It is true, that the gods hold a debate before the deſcent of Minerva, and ſome ſmall time muſt be allowed for that tranſaction. It is remarkable, that there is not one ſimile in this book, except we allow thoſe three words to be one, ὄρνις δ' ὡς ἀνόπαια; the ſame obſervation is true of the firſt book of the Iliad. See the notes on that place.

THE

THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

The council of Ithaca.

Telemachus, in the aſſembly of the lords of Ithaca, complains of the injuſtice done him by the ſuitors, and inſiſts upon their departure from his palace; appealing to the princes, and exciting the people to declare againſt them. The ſuitors endeavour to juſtify their ſtay, at leaſt till he ſhall ſend the queen to the court of Icarius her father; which he refuſes. There appears a prodigy of two eagles in the ſky, which an augur expounds to the ruin of the ſuitors. Telemachus then demands a veſſel to carry him to Pylos and Sparta, there to enquire of his father's fortunes. Pallas in the ſhape of Mentor (an ancient friend of Ulyſſes) helps him to a ſhip, aſſiſts him in preparing neceſſaries for the voyage, and embarks with him that night; which concludes the ſecond day from the opening of the poem.

The ſcene continues in the palace of Ulyſſes in Ithaca.

NOW red'ning from the dawn, the morning-ray
Glow'd in the front of heav'n, and gave the day.
The youthful hero, with returning light,
Roſe anxious from th' inquietudes of night.

A

* This book opens with the firſt appearance of Telemachus upon the ſtage of action. And Boſſu obſerves the great judgement of the poet, in beginning with the tranſactions of Ithaca in the abſence of Ulyſſes: by this method he ſets the conduct of Telemachus

A royal robe he wore, with graceful pride,
A two edg'd falchion threaten'd by his ſide,
Embroider'd ſandals glitter'd as he trod,
And forth he mov'd, majeſtic as a god.
Then by his heralds, reſtleſs of delay,
To council calls the peers: the peers obey.
Soon as in ſolemn form th' aſſembly ſat,
From his high dome himſelf deſcends in ſtate.
Bright in his hand a pond'rous jav'lin ſhin'd;
Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind;

Pallas

machus, Penelope, and the ſuitors, in a ſtrong point of light; they all have a large ſhare in the ſtory of the poem, and conſequently ought to have diſtinguiſhing characters. It is as neceſſary in epic poetry, as it is on the theatre, to let us immediately into the character of every perſon whom the poet introduces: this adds perſpicuity to the ſtory, and we immediately grow acquainted with each perſonage, and intereſt ourſelves in the good or ill fortune that attends them through the whole relation.

Telemachus is now about twenty years of age: in the eleventh book, the poet tells us, he was an infant in the arms of his mother, when Ulyſſes ſailed to Troy; that hero was abſent near twenty years, and from hence we may gather the exact age of Telemachus. He is every where deſcribed as a perſon of piety to the gods, of duty to his parents, and as a lover of his country: he is prudent, temperate, and valiant: and the poet well ſets off the importance of this young hero, by giving him the goddeſs of war and wiſdom for his conſtant attendant.

Ver. 13. ——*In his hand a pond'rous jav'lin ſhin'd.*] The poet deſcribes Telemachus as if he were marching againſt an enemy, or going to a council of war, rather than to an aſſembly of peers in his own country: two reaſons are aſſigned for this conduct; either this was the common uſage of princes in thoſe times, or Telemachus might look upon the ſuitors as enemies, and conſequently go to council in arms as againſt enemies. Euſtathius.

Ver. 14. *Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind.*] This paſſage has not eſcaped the raillery of the critics; they look upon it as a mean deſcription of a hero and a prince, to give him a brace of dogs only for his guards or attendants: but ſuch was the ſimplicity of ancient princes, that except in war they had rarely any attendants

Pallas with grace divine his form improves,
And gazing crouds admire him as he moves.
His father's throne he fill'd: while diſtant ſtood
The hoary peers, and aged wiſdom bow'd.
'Twas ſilence all, at laſt Ægyptius ſpoke;
Ægyptius, by his age and ſorrows broke:
A length of days his ſoul with prudence crown'd,
A length of days had bent him to the ground.
His eldeſt * hope in arms to Ilion came,
By great Ulyſſes taught the path to fame;
But (hapleſs youth) the hideous Cyclops tore
His quiv'ring limbs, and quaff'd his ſpouting gore.
Three ſons remain'd: to climb with haughty fires
The royal bed, Eurynomus aſpires;
The reſt with duteous love his griefs aſſwage,
And eaſe the ſire of half the cares of age.
Yet ſtill his Antiphus he loves, he mourns,
And as he ſtood, he ſpoke and wept by turns.
Since great Ulyſſes ſought the Phrygian plains,
Within theſe walls inglorious ſilence reigns.

Say

tendants or equipage. And we may be confident Homer copies after the cuſtom of the time, unleſs we can be ſo abſurd as to ſuppoſe, he would feign low circumſtances unneceſſarily, through a want of judgement.

* Antiphus.

Ver. 31. *Yet ſtill his Antiphus he loves, he mourns.*] Homer, ſays Euſtathius, inſerts theſe particularities concerning the family of Ægyptius, to give an air of truth to his ſtory: it does not appear that Ægyptius knew the certainty of the death of Antiphus: (for it is the poet who relates it, and not the father;) whence, as Dacier obſerves, ſhould he learn it? He only laments him, according to the prevailing opinion that all the companions of Ulyſſes were loſt with Ulyſſes.

Ver. 33. *Since great Ulyſſes* &c.] We here are told, that there never had been any council convened in Ithaca, ſince the departure of Ulyſſes. The general deſign and moral of the Odyſſey, is to inform us of the miſchievous effects which the abſence of a king and father

Say then, ye peers! by whoſe commands we meet?
Why here once more in ſolemn council ſit?
Ye young, ye old, the weighty cauſe diſcloſe:
Arrives ſome meſſage of invading foes?
Or ſay, does high neceſſity of ſtate
Inſpire ſome patriot, and demand debate!
The preſent ſynod ſpeaks its author wiſe;
Aſſiſt him, Jove, thou regent of the skies!
He ſpoke. Telemachus with tranſport glows,
Embrace'd the omen, and majeſtic roſe:
(His royal hand th' imperial ſcepter ſway'd)
Then thus, addreſſing to Ægyptius, ſaid.
Rev'rend old man! lo here confeſt he ſtands
By whom ye meet; my grief your care demands.
No ſtory I unfold of public woes,
Nor bear advices of impending foes:
Peace the bleſt land, and joys inceſſant crown;
Of all this happy realm, I grieve alone.
For my loſt ſire, continual ſorrows ſpring,
The great, the good; your father, and your king.
Yet

father of a family produces: we deprive, as Boſſu obſerves, the poem of its very ſoul, and ſpoil the fable, if we retrench from it the diſorders which the ſuitors create in the abſence of Ulyſſes, both in his family and dominions. Nothing can give us a greater image of thoſe diſorders, than what is here related: what muſt a kingdom ſuffer in twenty years without a ruler, without a council to make laws or puniſh enormities? Such is the condition of Ithaca: Laertes is ſuperannuated; Penelope oppreſſed by the violence of the ſuitors; and Telemachus to this time, in his minority.

Ver. 54. *Your father, and your king.*] Telemachus here ſets the character of Ulyſſes, as a king, in the moſt agreeable point of light: he ruled his people with the ſame mildneſs as a father rules his children. This muſt needs have a very happy effect upon the audience; not only as it ſhews Ulyſſes to have been a good governor; but as it recalls the memory of the happineſs they received

Yet more; our houſe from its foundation bows,
Our foes are pow'rful, and your ſons the foes:
Hither, unwelcome to the queen they come;
Why ſeek they not the rich Icarian dome?
If ſhe muſt wed, from other hands require
The dow'ry: is Telemachus her ſire?
Yet thro' my court the noiſe of revel rings,
And waſtes the wiſe frugality of kings.
Scarce all my herds their luxury ſuffice;
Scarce all my wine their midnight-hours ſupplies.
Safe in my youth, in riot ſtill they grow,
Nor in the helpleſs orphan dread a foe.
But come it will, the time when manhood grants
More pow'rful advocates than vain complaints.
Approach that hour! unſufferable wrong
Cries to the gods, and vengeance ſleeps too long.
Riſe then, ye peers! with virtuous anger riſe;
Your fame revere but moſt th' avenging ſkies.
By all the deathleſs pow'rs that reign above,
By righteous Themis and by thund'ring Jove,
(Themis, who gives to councils, or denies
Succeſs; and humbles, or confirms the wiſe),

Riſe

ceived from that mild government, and obliquely condemns them of ingratitude who had forgot it. By this method alſo the poet intereſts us deeply in the ſufferings of Ulyſſes; we cannot ſee a good man and good king in diſtreſs, without the moſt tender emotions.

Ver. 63. *Scarce all my herds their luxury ſuffice.*] This paſſage is ridiculed by the critics; they ſet it in a wrong light, and then grow very pleaſant upon it: Telemachus makes a ſad outcry becauſe the ſuitors eat his ſheep, his beeves and fatted goats; and at laſt falls into tears. The truth is, the riches of kings and princes, in thoſe early ages, conſiſted chiefly in flocks and cattle; thus Æneas and Paris are deſcribed as tending their flocks, &c. and Abraham in the Scriptures, as abounding in this kind of wealth.

Ver. 75. *Themis, who gives to councils, or denies*
Succeſs;——]

Euſtathius obſerves, that there was a cuſtom to carry the ſtatue of

Riſe in my aid! ſuffice the tears that flow
For my loſt ſire, nor add new woe to woe.
If e'er he bore the ſword to ſtrengthen ill,
Or having pow'r to wrong, betray'd the will,
On me, on me your kindled wrath aſſwage,
And bid the voice of lawleſs riot rage.
If ruin to our royal race ye doom,
Be you the ſpoilers, and our wealth conſume.
Then might we hope redreſs from juſter laws,
And raiſe all Ithaca to aid our cauſe:
But while your ſons commit th' unpuniſh'd wrong,
You make the arm of violence too ſtrong.
While thus he ſpoke, with rage and grief he frown'd,
and daſh'd th' imperial ſceptre to the ground.
The big round tear hung trembling in his eye:
The ſynod griev'd, and gave a pitying ſigh,
Then ſilent ſat.—At length Antinous burns
With haughty rage, and ſternly thus returns.
O inſolence of youth! whoſe tongue affords
Such railing eloquence, and war of words.

Studious

Themis to the aſſemblies in former ages, and carry it back again when thoſe aſſemblies were diſſolved; and thus Themis may be ſaid to form, and diſſolve an aſſembly. Dacier diſlikes this aſſertion, as having no foundation in antiquity; ſhe thinks that the aſſertion of Telemachus is general, that he intimates, it is juſtice alone that eſtabliſhes the councils of mankind, and that injuſtice confounds and brings the wicked deſigns of men to confuſion.

Ver. 84. *Be you the ſpoilers, and our wealth conſume.*] To underſtand this paſſage, we muſt remember, as Euſtathius remarks, that Telemachus is pleading his cauſe before the Ithacenſians; them he conſtitutes the judges of his cauſe: he therefore prevents an anſwer which they might make, viz. "We are not the men that are guilty of theſe outrages;" Telemachus rejoins, "It were better for me to ſuffer from your hands; for by your quieſcence you make my affairs deſperate;" an intimation that they ſhould riſe in his defence.

Ver. 95. *O inſolence of youth!* &c.] We find Antinous always

ſetting

Studious thy country's worthies to defame,
Thy erring voice diſplays thy mother's ſhame.
Eluſive of the bridal day, ſhe gives
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.
Did not the ſun, thro' heav'n's wide azure roll'd,
For three long years the royal fraud behold?
While ſhe, laborious in deluſion ſpread
The ſpacious loom, and mix'd the various thread:
Where as to life the wond'rous figures riſe,
Thus ſpoke th' inventive queen, with artful ſighs.
" Tho' cold in death Ulyſſes breathes no more,
" Ceaſe yet a while to urge the bridal hour;
" Ceaſe, till to great Laërtes I bequeath
" A taſk of grief, his ornaments of death.
" Leſt

ſetting himſelf in the ſtrongeſt oppoſition to Telemachus; and therefore he is the firſt that falls by the ſpear of Ulyſſes; the poet obſerves juſtice, and, as Antinous is the firſt in guilt, he is the firſt in puniſhment. What Antinous ſays in this ſpeech, concerning the treachery of the female ſervant of Penelope, prepares the way for the puniſhment Ulyſſes inflicts on ſome of the maids in the concluſion of the poem: this is an act of poetical juſtice; and it is as neceſſary in epic as in tragic poetry, to reward the juſt, and puniſh the guilty. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 99. *Eluſive of the bridal day, ſhe gives*
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.]

It will be neceſſary to vindicate the character of Penelope, the heroine of the poem, from the aſperſion of Antinous. It muſt be confeſt that ſhe has a very hard game to play, ſhe neither dares conſent, nor deny; if ſhe conſents, ſhe injures Ulyſſes, whom ſhe ſtill expects to return; if ſhe denies, ſhe endangers the throne, and the life of Telemachus, from the violence of the ſuitors; ſo that no other method is left to elude their addreſſes.

Ver. 109. *Ceaſe, till to great Laërtes I bequeath*
A taſk of grief, his ornaments of death.]

It was an ancient cuſtom to dedicate the fineſt pieces of weaving and embroidery, to honour the funerals of the dead: and theſe were uſually wrought by the neareſt relations in their life-time. Thus

" Leſt when the fates his royal aſhes claim,
" The Grecian matrons taint my ſpotleſs fame;
" When he, whom living mighty realms obey'd,
" Shall want in death a ſhroud to grace his ſhade."
Thus ſhe: at once the gen'rous train complies,
Nor fraud miſtruſts in virtue's fair diſguiſe.
The work ſhe ply'd; but ſtudious of delay,
By night revers'd the labours of the day.
While thrice the ſun his annual journey made,
The conſcious lamp the midnight fraud ſurvey'd;
Unheard, unſeen, three years her arts prevail;
The fourth, her maid unfolds th' amazing tale.
We ſaw, as unperceiv'd we took our ſtand,
The backward labours of her faithleſs hand.
Then urge'd, ſhe perfects her illuſtrious toils;
A wond'rous monument of female wiles!
But you, oh peers! and thou, oh prince! give ear
(I ſpeak aloud, that every Greek may hear),
Diſmiſs the queen; and, if her ſire approves,
Let him eſpouſe her to the peer ſhe loves:
Bid inſtant to prepare the bridal train,
Nor let a race of princes wait in vain,
Tho' with a grace divine her ſoul is bleſt,
And all Minerva breathes within her breaſt,
In wond'rous arts than woman more renown'd,
And more than woman with deep wiſdom crown'd;
Tho' Tyro nor Mycene match her name,
Nor great Alcmena (the proud boaſts of fame),
Yet thus by heav'n adorn'd, by heav'n's decree
She ſhines with fatal excellence, to thee:

With

in the twenty-ſecond Iliad, Andromache laments, that the body of Hector muſt be expoſed to the air, without thoſe ornaments.

Ver. 140. *She ſhines with fatal excellence to thee.*] Euſtathius obſerves, that Antinous, in the opening of his ſpeech, throws the fault upon Penelope, to engage the favour of the multitude: but being

With thee, the bowl we drain, indulge the feaſt,
Till righteous heav'n reclaim her ſtubborn breaſt.
What tho' from pole to pole reſounds her name!
The ſon's deſtruction waits the mother's fame:
For till ſhe leaves thy court, it is decreed,
Thy bowl to empty, and thy flock to bleed.
While yet he ſpeaks, Telemachus replies.
Ev'n nature ſtarts, and what ye aſk denies.
Thus, ſhall I thus repay a mother's cares,
Who gave me life, and nurs'd my infant years?
While ſad and foreign ſhores Ulyſſes treads,
Or glides a ghoſt with unapparent ſhades;
How to Icarius in the bridal hour
Shall I, by waſte undone, refund the dow'r?
How from my father ſhould I vengeance dread?
How would my mother curſe my hated head?
And while in wrath to vengeful fiends ſhe cries,
How from their hell would vengeful fiends ariſe?
Abhorr'd by all, accurs'd my name would grow,
The earth's diſgrace, and humankind my foe.
If this diſpleaſe, why urge ye here your ſtay?
Haſt from the court, ye ſpoilers, haſte away:

being conſcious that he had ſaid things which Penelope would reſent, he extols her in the concluſion of it. He aſcribes an obſtinacy of virtue to her, and by this double conduct endeavours to make both Penelope and the multitude his friends.

Ver. 147. *Telemachus's reply.*] Telemachus every where ſpeaks with an openneſs and bravery of ſpirit; this ſpeech is a teſtimony of it, as well as his former; he anſwers chiefly to the diſmiſſion of Penelope, ſays it would be an offence againſt heaven and earth; and concludes with a vehemence of expreſſion, and tells Antinous that ſuch a word, μῦθον, ſhall never fall from his tongue.

Ver. 155. *How from my father ſhould I vengeance dread?*] There is an ambiguity in the word father; it may either ſignify Icarius or Ulyſſes, as Euſtathius obſerves: but I think the context determines the perſon of Ulyſſes; for Telemachus believes him to be yet living, and conſequently might fear his vengeance, if he offered any indignity to Penelope.

Waſte in wild riot what your land allows,
There ply the early feaſt, and late carouſe.
But, if, to honour loſt, 'tis ſtill decreed
For you my bowl ſhall flow, my flocks ſhall bleed;
Judge and aſſert my right, impartial Jove!
By him, and all th' immortal hoſt above,
(A ſacred oath) if heav'n the pow'r ſupply,
Vengeance I vow, and for your wrongs ye die.
With that, two eagles, from a mountain's height
By Jove's command direct their rapid flight;
Swift they deſcend, with wing to wing conjoin'd,
Stretch their broad plumes, and float upon the wind.
Above th' aſſembled peers they wheel on high,
And clang their wings, and hov'ring beat the ſky;
With ardent eyes the rival train they threat,
And ſhrieking loud, denounce approaching fate.
They cuff, they tear; their cheeks and neck they rend,
And from their plumes huge drops of blood deſcend:
Then ſailing o'er the domes and tow'rs, they fly
Full tow'rd the eaſt, and mount into the ſky.
The wond'ring rivals gaze with cares oppreſt,
And chilling horrors freeze in ev'ry breaſt.
Till big with knowledge of approaching woes
The prince of augurs, Halitherſes, roſe:
Preſcient he view'd th' aerial tracks, and drew
A ſure preſage from ev'ry wing that flew.

Ver. 171, &c. *The prodigy of the two eagles.*] This prodigy is uſhered in very magnificently, and the verſes are lofty and ſonorous. The eagles are Ulyſſes and Telemachus: "By Jove's command "they fly from a mountain's height: this denotes that the two heroes are inſpired by Jupiter, and come from the country to the deſtruction of the ſuitors: the eagles fly "with wing to wing "conjoin'd;" this ſhews, that they act in concert and unity of councils: at firſt they "float upon the wind;" this implies the calmneſs and ſecreſy of the approach of thoſe heroes: at laſt they "clang their wings, and hovering beat the ſkies, this ſhews the violence of the aſſault: "with ardent eyes the rival train they "threat."

Ye

Ye ſons (he cry'd) of Ithaca, give ear,
Hear all! but chiefly you, oh rivals! hear.
Deſtruction ſure o'er all your heads impends;
Ulyſſes comes, and death his ſteps attends.
Nor to the great alone is death decreed;
We, and our guilty Ithaca, muſt bleed.
Why ceaſe we then the wrath of heav'n to ſtay?
Be humbled all, and lead, ye great! the way.
For lo! my words no fancy'd woes relate:
I ſpeak from ſcience, and the voice is fate.
When great Ulyſſes ſought the Phrygian ſhores
To ſhake with war proud Ilion's lofty tow'rs,
Deeds then undone my faithful tongue foretold:
Heav'n ſeal'd my words, and you thoſe deeds behold.
I ſee (I cry'd) his woes, a countleſs train;
I ſee his friends o'erwhelm'd beneath the main;
How twice ten years from ſhore to ſhore he roams;
Now twice ten years are paſt, and now he comes!
To whom Eurymachus——Fly, dotard, fly!
With thy wiſe dreams, and fables of the ſky.

Ver. 203. *I ſee (I cry'd) his woes——*
I ſee his friends o'erwhelm'd, &c.

In three lines (obſerves Euſtathius) the poet gives us the whole Odyſſey in miniature: and it is wonderful to think, that ſo plain a ſubject ſhould produce ſuch variety in the proceſs of it. Ariſtotle obſerves the ſimplicity of Homer's platform; which is no more than this: a prince is abſent from his country; Neptune deſtroys his companions; in his abſence his family is diſordered by many princes that addreſs his wife, and plot againſt the life of his only ſon; but at laſt after many ſtorms he returns, puniſhes the ſuitors, and re-eſtabliſhes his affairs: this is all that is eſſential to the poem, the reſt of it is made up of epiſodes. And yet with what miracles of poetry has he furniſhed out his poem?

Ver. 207. *The ſpeech of Eurymachus.*] It has been obſerved, that Homer is the father of oratory as well as poetry, and it muſt be confeſſed, that there is not any one branch of it, that is not to be found in his poetry. The invective, perſuaſive, ironical, etc. may all be gathered from it.

Go

Go propheſy at home; thy ſons adviſe:
Here thou art ſage in vain—I better read the ſkies.
Unnumber'd birds glide thro' th' aërial way,
Vagrants of air, and unforeboding ſtray,
Cold in the tomb, or in the deeps below
Ulyſſes lies: oh wert thou laid as low!
Then would that buſy head no broils ſuggeſt,
Nor fire to rage Telemachus's breaſt.
From him ſome bribe thy venal tongue requires,
And int'reſt, not the god, thy voice inſpires.
His guideleſs youth, if thy experience'd age
Miſlead fallacious into idle rage,
Vengeance deſerv'd thy malice ſhall repreſs,
And but augment the wrongs thou would'ſt redreſs.
Telemachus may bid the queen repair
To great Icarius, whoſe paternal care
Will guide her paſſion, and reward her choice,
With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.
Till ſhe retires, determin'd we remain,
And both the prince and augur threat in vain:
His pride of words, and thy wild dream of fate,
Move not the brave, or only move their hate.
Threat on, oh prince! elude the bridal day,
Threat on, 'till all thy ſtores in waſte decay.
True, Greece affords a train of lovely dames,
In wealth and beauty worthy of our flames:
But never from this nobler ſuit we ceaſe;
For wealth and beauty leſs than virtue pleaſe.
To whom the youth. Since then in vain I tell
My num'rous woes, in ſilence let them dwell.
But heav'n, and all the Greeks, have heard my wrongs:
To heav'n, and all the Greeks redreſs belongs.

Ver. 239. ——*All the Greeks have heard my wrongs.*] It is neceſſary for the reader to carry in his mind, that this aſſembly conſiſts not only of the peers, but of the people of Ithaca: for to the people Telemachus here appeals.

Yet

Yet this I aſk (nor be it aſk'd in vain)
A bark to waft me o'er the rolling main;
The realms of Pyle and Sparta to explore,
And ſeek my royal ſire from ſhore to ſhore:
If, or to fame his doubtful fate be known,
Or to be learn'd from oracles alone?
If yet he lives; with patience I forbear,
'Till the fleet hours reſtore the circling year:
But if already wand'ring in the train
Of empty ſhades; I meaſure back the main,
Plant the fair column o'er the mighty dead,
And yield his conſort to the nuptial bed.
He ceas'd; and while abaſh'd the peers attend,
Mentor aroſe, Ulyſſes' faithful friend:
[When fierce in arms he ſought the ſcenes of war,
" My friend (he cry'd) my palace be thy care;
" Years roll'd on years my God-like ſire decay,
" Guard thou his age, and his beheſts obey."]
Stern as he roſe, he caſt his eyes around,
That flaſh'd with rage; and as he ſpoke, he frown'd.
O never, never more! let king be juſt,
Be mild in pow'r, or faithful to his truſt!
Let tyrants govern with an iron rod,
Oppreſs, deſtroy, and be the ſcourge of God;

Ver. 254. *Mentor aroſe, Ulyſſes' faithful friend.*] The name of Mentor is another inſtance of the gratitude of our poet's temper, it being the ſame which belonged to a friend of his by whom he was entertained in Ithaca, during a defluxion on his eyes which ſeized him in his voyages: and at whoſe houſe he is ſaid to have laid the plan of this poem. This character of Mentor is well ſuſtaind by his ſpeech, and by the aſſiſtance he gratefully gives to young Telemachus on all occaſions.

Ver. 258. *Guard thou my ſire, and his beheſts obey.*] The original ſays only, " Obey the old man." Euſtathius rightly determines, that the expreſſion means Laërtes. The poet loſes no opportunity of giving Ulyſſes an excellent character; this is as neceſſary as continually to repeat the diſorders of the ſuitors.

Since

Since he who like a father held his rein,
So ſoon forgot, was juſt and mild in vain!
True, while my friend is griev'd, his griefs I ſhare;
Yet now the rivals are my ſmalleſt care:
They, for the mighty miſchiefs they deviſe,
E'er long ſhall pay—their forfeit lives the price.
But againſt you, ye Greeks! ye coward train,
Gods! how my ſoul is mov'd with juſt diſdain?
Dumb ye all ſtand, and not one tongue affords
His injur'd prince the little aid of words.
While yet he ſpoke, Leocritus rejoin'd:
O pride of words, and arrogance of mind!
Would'ſt thou to riſe in arms the Greeks adviſe?
Join all your pow'rs! in arms, ye Greeks ariſe!
Yet would your pow'rs in vain our ſtrength oppoſe;
The valiant few o'ermatch an hoſt of foes.
Should great Ulyſſes ſtern appear in arms,
While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms;
Tho' to his breaſt his ſpouſe with tranſport flies,
Torn from her breaſt, that hour, Ulyſſes dies.
But hence retreating to your domes repair;
To arm the veſſel, Mentor! be thy care,
And Halitherſes! thine: be each his friend;
Ye lov'd the father: go, the ſon attend.
But yet, I truſt, the boaſter means to ſtay
Safe in the court, nor tempt the wat'ry way.
Then, with a ruſhing ſound, th' aſſembly bend,
Diverſe their ſteps: the rival rout aſcend

The

Ver. 282. *While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms.*] The deſign of this ſpeech is to deter the people of Ithaca from riſing in the cauſe of Ulyſſes: Mentor ſpeaks juſtly; Leocritus inſolently; Mentor ſets before them the worth of Ulyſſes; Leocritus the power of the ſuitors: Mentor ſpeaks like a brave man; Leocritus (obſerves Euſtathius) like a coward, who, wanting true courage, flies to the aſſiſtance of wine to raiſe a falſe one.

Ver. 291. *Then, with a ruſhing ſound*, etc.] The aſſembly which

was

The royal dome; while ſad the prince explores
The neighb'ring main, and ſorrowing treads the ſhores.
There, as the waters o'er his hands he ſhed,
The royal ſuppliant to Minerva pray'd.
O goddeſs! who deſcending from the ſkies
Vouchſaf'd thy preſence to my wond'ring eyes,
By whoſe commands the raging deeps I trace,
And ſeek my ſire thro' ſtorms and rolling ſeas!
Hear from thy heav'ns above, oh warriour maid!
Deſcend once more, propitious to my aid.
Without thy preſence, vain is thy command;
Greece, and the rival train, thy voice withſtand.
Indulgent to his pray'r, the goddeſs took
Sage Mentor's form, and thus like Mentor ſpoke.
O prince, in early youth divinely wiſe,
Born, the Ulyſſes of thy age to riſe!
If to the ſon the father's worth deſcends,
O'er the wide waves ſucceſs thy ways attends:
To tread the walks of death he ſtood prepar'd,
And what he greatly thought, he nobly dar'd.
Were not wiſe ſons deſcendent of the wiſe,
And did not heroes from brave heroes riſe;
Vain were my hopes: few ſons attain the praiſe
Of their great ſires, and moſt their ſires diſgrace.
But ſince thy veins paternal virtue fires,
And all Penelope thy ſoul inſpires:

was convened by Telemachus, is broke up in a riotous manner by Leocritus, who had no right to diſſolve it. This agrees with the lawleſs ſtate of the country in the abſence of its king, and ſhews (ſays Euſtathius) that the ſuitors had uſurp'd the chief authority.

Ver. 307. *The ſpeech of Minerva.*] This ſpeech of Minerva is ſuited to encourage a young man to imitate the virtue of his father, and not to ſuffer himſelf to be overcome by any appearance of difficulties. She ſets his father before his eyes, and tells him, there was never any danger which he durſt not encounter; if he ſhould ſuffer himſelf to be diſcouraged, he would prove himſelf an unworthy ſon of a brave father. *Dacier. Euſtathius.*

Go,

Go, and ſucceed! the rivals aims deſpiſe;
For never, never, wicked man was wiſe.
Blind they rejoice, tho' now, ev'n now they fall;
Death haſtes amain: one hour o'erwhelms them all!
And lo, with ſpeed we plough the wat'ry way;
My pow'r ſhall guard thee, and my hand convey:
The winged veſſel ſtudious I prepare,
Thro' ſeas and realms companion of thy care.
Thou to the court aſcend; and to the ſhores
(When night advances) bear the naval ſtores;
Bread, that decaying man with ſtrength ſupplies,
And gen'rous wine, which thoughtful ſorrow flies.
Meanwhile the mariners by my command
Shall ſpeed aboard, a valiant choſen band.
Wide o'er the bay, by veſſel veſſel rides;
The beſt I chuſe to waft thee o'er the tides.
She ſpoke: to his high dome the prince returns,
And as he moves with royal anguiſh mourns.
'Twas riot all, among the lawleſs train;
Boar bled by boar, and goat by goat lay ſlain.
Arriv'd, his hand the gay Antinous preſt,
And thus deriding, with a ſmile addreſt.
Grieve not, oh daring prince! that noble heart;
Ill ſuits gay youth the ſtern herioc part.
Indulge the genial hour, unbend thy ſoul,
Leave thought to age, and drain the flowing bowl.
Studious to eaſe thy grief, our care provides
The bark, to waft thee o'er the ſwelling tides.
Is this (returns the prince) for mirth a time?
When lawleſs gluttons riot, mirth's a crime;
The luſcious wines, diſhonour'd, loſe their taſte;
The ſong is noiſe, and impious is the feaſt.
Suffice it to have ſpent with ſwift decay
The wealth of kings, and made my youth a prey.
But now the wiſe inſtructions of the ſage,
And manly thoughts inſpir'd by manly age,

Teach me to ſeek redreſs for all my woe,
Here, or in Pyle—in Pyle, or here, your foe.
Deny your veſſels, ye deny in vain;
A private voyager I paſs the main.
Free breathe the winds, and free the billows flow,
And where on earth I live, I live your foe.
He ſpoke and frown'd, nor longer deign'd to ſtay,
Sternly his hand withdrew, and ſtrode away.
Meantime, o'er all the dome, they quaff, they feaſt,
Deriſive taunts were ſpread from gueſt to gueſt,
And each in jovial mood his mate addreſt.
Tremble ye not, oh friends! and coward fly,
Doom'd by the ſtern Telemachus to die:
To Pyle or Sparta to demand ſupplies,
Big with revenge, the mighty warriour flies:
Or comes from Ephyré, with poiſons fraught,
And kills us all in one tremendous draught?
Or who can ſay (his gameſome mate replies)
But while the danger of the deeps he tries,
He, like his ſire, may ſink depriv'd of breath,
And puniſh us unkindly by his death?
What mighty labours would he then create,
To ſeize his treaſures, and divide his ſtate,
The royal palace to the queen convey,
Or him ſhe bleſſes in the bridal day!
Meantime the lofty rooms the prince ſurveys,
Where lay the treaſures of th' Ithacian race:

Here

Ver. 378. *The royal palace to the queen convey*] The ſuitors allot the palace to Penelope: it being, ſays Euſtathius, the only thing they cannot conſume; and adds, that the expreſſion of the ſuitors, concerning the labour they ſhould undergo in dividing the ſubſtance of Ulyſſes, ſhews the wealth and abundance of that hero.

Ver. 381. *Where lay the treaſures of th' Ithacian race.*] Such paſſages as theſe have ever furniſhed critics with matter of raillery; they think ſuch houſhold cares unworthy of a king, and that this conduct ſuits better with vulgar perſons of leſs fortune. I confeſs,

Here ruddy braſs and gold refulgent blaz'd;
There poliſh'd cheſts embroider'd veſtures grace'd;
Here jars of oil breath'd forth a rich perfume;
There caſks of wine in rows adorn'd the dome.
(Pure flav'rous wine, by gods in bounty giv'n,
And worthy to exalt the feaſts of heav'n.)
Untouch'd they ſtood, 'till his long labours o'er,
The great Ulyſſes reach'd his native ſhore.
A double ſtrength of bars ſecur'd the gates:
Faſt by the door the wiſe Euryclea waits;
Euryclea, who, great Ops! thy lineage ſhar'd,
And watch'd all night, all day; a faithful guard.
To whom the prince, O thou, whoſe guardian care
Nurs'd the moſt wretched king that breathes the air,
Untouch'd and ſacred may theſe veſſels ſtand,
'Till great Ulyſſes views his native land.
But by thy care twelve urns of wine be fill'd,
Next theſe in worth, and firm thoſe urns be ſeal'd;
And twice ten meaſures of the choiceſt flour
Prepar'd, ere yet deſcends the ev'ning hour.
For when the fav'ring ſhades of night ariſe,
And peaceful ſlumbers cloſe my mother's eyes,
Me from our coaſt ſhall ſpreading ſails convey,
To ſeek Ulyſſes thro' the wat'ry way.
While yet he ſpoke, ſhe fill'd the walls with cries,
And tears ran trickling from her aged eyes.
Oh whither, whither flies my ſon? ſhe cry'd,
To realms, that rocks and roaring ſeas divide?
In foreign lands thy father's days decay'd,
And foreign lands contain the mighty dead.
The wat'ry way ill-fated if thou try,

ſuch deſcriptions now would be ridiculous in a poet, becauſe unſuitable to our manners. But if we look upon ſuch paſſages as pictures and exact repreſentations of the old world, the reader will find a ſenſible pleaſure in them.

All,

All, all muſt periſh, and by fraud you die!
Then ſtay, my child! ſtorms beat, and rolls the main;
Oh beat thoſe ſtorms, and roll the ſeas in vain!
Far hence (reply'd the prince) thy fears be driv'n:
Heav'n calls me forth; theſe counſels are of heav'n.
But by the pow'rs that hate the perjur'd, ſwear,
To keep my voyage from the royal ear,
Nor uncompell'd the dang'rous truth betray,
'Till twice ſix times deſcends the lamp of day:
Leſt the ſad tale a mother's life impair,
And grief deſtroy what time a-while may ſpare.
Thus he. The matron with uplifted eyes
Atteſts th' all-ſeeing Sov'reign of the ſkies.
Then ſtudious ſhe prepares the choiceſt flour,
The ſtrength of wheat, and wines an ample ſtore.
While to the rival train the prince returns,
The martial goddeſs with impatience burns;
Like thee, Telemachus, in voice and ſize,
With ſpeed divine from ſtreet to ſtreet ſhe flies,
She bids the mariners prepar'd, to ſtand,
When night deſcends, embody'd on the ſtrand.
Then to Noëmon ſwift ſhe runs, ſhe flies,
And aſks a bark: the chief a bark ſupplies.
And now, declining with his ſloping wheels,
Down ſunk the ſun behind the weſtern hills.
The goddeſs ſhov'd the veſſel from the ſhores,
And ſtow'd within its womb the naval ſtores.
Full in the op'nings of the ſpacious main
It rides; and now deſcends the ſailor-train.

Ver. 421. *Till twice ſix times deſcends the lamp of day.*] It may be demanded how it was probable (if poſſible) that the departure of Telemachus could be concealed twelve days from the knowledge of ſo fond a mother as Penelope? It muſt be allowed, that this would not be poſſible, except in a time of ſuch great diſorder as the ſuitors creared: Penelope confined herſelf almoſt continually within her own apartment, and very ſeldom appeared publicly; ſo that there is no improbability in this relation. *Dacier.*

Next, to the court, impatient of delay,
With rapid ſtep the goddeſs urge'd her way:
There ev'ry eye with ſlumb'rous chains ſhe bound,
And daſh'd the flowing goblet to the ground.
Drowſy they roſe, with heavy fumes oppreſt,
Reel'd from the palace, and retir'd to reſt.
Then thus, in Mentor's rev'rend form array'd,
Spoke to Telemachus the martial maid.
Lo! on the ſeas, prepar'd, the veſſel ſtands,
Th' impatient mariner thy ſpeed demands.
Swift as ſhe ſpoke, with rapid pace ſhe leads;
The footſteps of the deity he treads.
Swift to the ſhore they move: along the ſtrand
The ready veſſel rides, the ſailors ready ſtand.
He bids them bring their ſtores; th' attending train
Load the tall bark, and launch into the main.
The prince and goddeſs to the ſtern aſcend;
To the ſtrong ſtroke at once the rowers bend.
Full from the weſt ſhe bids freſh breezes blow;
The ſable billows foam and roar below.
The chief his orders gives; th' obedient band
With due obſervance wait the chief's command;
With ſpeed the maſt they rear, with ſpeed unbind
The ſpacious ſheet, and ſtretch it to the wind.
High

Ver. 460. ——*She bids freſh breezes blow.*] This alſo is an allegory, and implies that the ſailors had the experience and art to guide the ſhip before the winds; but poetry, that delights to raiſe every circumſtance, exalts it into the marvellous, and aſcribes it to the goddeſs of wiſdom. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 464. *With ſpeed the maſt they rear.*] It is obſervable, that Homer never paſſes by an opportunity of deſcribing the ſea, or a ſhip under ſail; and in many other places, as well as in this, he dwells largely upon it: I take the reaſon to be, not only becauſe it furniſhed him with variety of poetical images, but becauſe he himſelf having made frequent voyages, had a full idea of it, and conſequently was delighted with it: this is evident from his conduct

High o'er the roaring waves the ſpreading ſails
Bow the tall maſt, and ſwell before the gales;
The crooked keel the parting ſurge divides,
And to the ſtern retreating roll the tides.
And now they ſhip their oars, and crown with wine
The holy goblet to the pow'rs divine;
Imploring all the gods that reign above,
But chief, the blue-ey'd progeny of Jove.
Thus all the night they ſtem the liquid way,
And end their voyage with the morning ray.

duct in the Iliad, where variety of alluſions and ſimilitudes are drawn from the ſea, and are not the ſmalleſt ornaments of his poetry.

THE ODYSSEY.

*BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

The interview of Telemachus and Neſtor.

Telemachus, guided by Pallas in the ſhape of Mentor, arrives in the morning at Pylos, where Neſtor and his ſons are ſacrificing on the ſea-ſhore to Neptune. Telemachus declares the occaſion of his coming, and Neſtor relates what paſt in their return from Troy, how their fleets were ſeparated, and he never ſince heard of Ulyſſes. They diſcourſe concerning the death of Agamemnon, the revenge of Oreſtes, and the injuries of the ſuitors. Neſtor adviſes him to go to Sparta, and inquire further of Menelaus The ſacrifice ending with the night, Minerva vaniſhes from them in the form of an eagle: Telemachus is lodged in the palace. The next morning they ſacrifice a bullock to Minerva, and Telemachus proceeds on his journey to Sparta, attended by Piſiſtratus.

The ſcene lies on the ſea-ſhore of Pylos.

THE ſacred ſun, above the waters rais'd,
Thro' heav'n's eternal brazen portals blaz'd;
And wide o'er earth diffus'd his chearing ray,
To gods and men to give the golden day.

Now

* The ſcene is now removed from Ithaca to Pylos, and with it a new vein of poetry is opened; inſtead of the riots of the ſuitors, we

Now on the coaſt of Pyle the veſſel falls,
Before old Neleus' venerable walls.
There, ſuppliant to the monarch of the flood,
At nine green theatres the Pylians ſtood.

we are entertained with the wiſdom and piety of Neſtor. This and the following book are a kind of ſupplement to the Iliad; the nature of epic poetry requires that ſomething ſhould be left to the imagination of the reader, nor is the picture to be intirely drawn at full length. Homer therefore, to ſatisfy our curioſity, gives an account of the fortunes of thoſe great men, who made ſo noble a figure at the ſiege of Troy. This conduct alſo ſhews his art: variety gives life and delight; and it is much more neceſſary in epic than in comic or tragic poetry, ſometimes to ſhift the ſcenes, to diverſify and embelliſh the ſtory. But as on the ſtage, the poet ought not to ſtep at once from one part of the world to a too remote country, (for this deſtroys credibility, and the auditor cannot fancy himſelf this minute here, and the next a thouſand miles diſtant), ſo in epic poetry, every removal muſt be within the degrees of probability. We have here a very eaſy tranſition; the poet carries his hero no farther than he really might ſail in the compaſs of time he allots for his voyage. If he had ſtill dwelt upon the diſorders of the ſuitors without interruption, he muſt grow tireſome; but he artfully breaks the thread of their ſtory with beautiful incidents and epiſodes, and reſerves the further recital of their diſorders for the end of his poem: by this means we ſit down with freſh appetite to the entertainment, and riſe at laſt not cloyed, but ſatisfied.

Ver. 8. *At nine green theatres.*] It may be aſked why the poet is ſo very particular as to mention, that the Pylians were divided into nine aſſemblies; and may it not ſeem a circumſtance of no importance? Euſtathius anſwers from the ancients, that there were nine cities ſubject to the power of Neſtor, five in Pylos, the reſt in Bœotia: the poet therefore allots one bank or theatre to every city, which conſiſted of five hundred men, the whole number amounting to four thouſand five hundred: theſe cities furniſhed the like complement of men to Neſtor for the war at Troy: he ſailed in ninety veſſels, and, allowing fifty men to each veſſel, they amount to that number. Hence it appears that this was a national ſacrifice, every city furniſhed nine bulls, and by conſequence the whole nation were partakers of it.

Each

Each held five hundred (a deputed train)
At each, nine oxen on the ſand lay ſlain.
They taſte the entrails, and the altars load
With ſmoking thighs, an off'ring to the god.
Full for the port the Ithacenſians ſtand,
And furl their ſails, and iſſue on the land.
Telemachus already preſt the ſhore;
Not firſt, the pow'r of wiſdom march'd before,
And e'er the ſacrificing throng he join'd,
Admoniſh'd thus his well attending mind.
Proceed, my ſon! this youthful ſhame expel;
An honeſt buſineſs never bluſh to tell.
To learn what fates thy wretched ſire detain,
We paſt the wide, immeaſurable main.
Meet then the ſenior far renown'd for ſenſe,
With rev'rend awe, but decent confidence:
Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies;
And ſure he will: for wiſdom never lies.
Oh tell me, Mentor! tell me faithful guide,
(The youth with prudent modeſty reply'd)
How ſhall I meet, or how accoſt the ſage,
Unſkill'd in ſpeech, nor yet mature of age?
Awful th' approach, and hard the taſk appears,
To queſtion wiſely men of riper years.
To whom the martial goddeſs thus rejoin'd.
Search, for ſome thoughts, thy own ſuggeſting mind;

Ver. 25. *Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies;*
And ſure he will: for wiſdom never lies.]

This ſentiment is truly noble, and as nobly expreſſed: the ſimplicity of the diction correſponds with that of the thought. Homer in many places teſtifies the utmoſt abhorrence of a lie. This verſe is twice repeated in the preſent book, as in ſome others; and nothing can be ſtronger in the ſame view than that of Achilles in the ninth Iliad:

Who dares think one thing, and another tell,
My heart deteſts him as the gates of hell,

And

And others, dictated by heav'nly pow'r,
Shall riſe ſpontaneous in the needful hour.
For nought unproſp'rous ſhall thy ways attend,
Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.
She ſpoke, and led the way with ſwifteſt ſpeed:
As ſwift, the youth purſu'd the way ſhe led;
And join'd the band before the ſacred fire.
Where ſat, encompaſt with his ſons, the ſire.
The youth of Pylos, ſome on pointed wood
Transfix'd the fragments, ſome prepar'd the food.
In friendly throngs they gather to embrace
Their unknown gueſts, and at the banquet place.
Piſiſtratus was firſt, to graſp their hands,
And ſpread ſoft hides upon the yellow ſands;
Along the ſhore th' illuſtrious pair he led,
Where Neſtor ſat with youthful Thraſymed.
To each a portion of the feaſt he bore,
And held a golden goblet foaming o'er;

Ver. 48. *And ſpread ſoft hides upon the yellow ſands.*] It is with great pleaſure that I read ſuch paſſages in an author of ſo great antiquity, as are pictures of the ſimplicity of thoſe heroic ages: it is the remark of Euſtathius, that Piſiſtratus the ſon of a king does not ſeat theſe ſtrangers upon purple tapeſtry, or any other coſtly furniture, but upon the ſkins of beaſts, that had nothing to recommend them but their ſoftneſs; being ſpread upon the ſand of the ſea ſhores.

This whole paſſage pleaſes me extremely; there is a ſpirit of true devotion, morality, and good ſenſe in it; and the decency of behaviour between Neſtor and Telemachus is deſcribed very happily: Neſtor ſhews great benevolence to Telemachus; Telemachus great reverence to Neſtor: the modeſty of the one, and the humanity of the other, are worthy of our obſervation. We ſee the ſame picture of Neſtor in the Odyſſey, that was drawn of him in the Iliad, with this only difference, that there he was a counſellor of war, here he is painted in ſofter colours, ruling his people in peace, and diffuſing a ſpirit of piety through his whole territories. He had now ſurvived the war of Troy almoſt ten years; and the gods reward the old age of this wiſe and religious prince with peace and happineſs.

Then

Then firſt approaching to the elder gueſt,
The latent goddeſs in theſe words addreſt.
Whoe'er thou art, whom fortune brings to keep
Theſe rites of Neptune, monarch of the deep,
Thee firſt it fits, oh ſtranger! to prepare
The due libation and the ſolemn pray'r:
Then give thy friend to ſhed the ſacred wine:
Tho' much thy younger, and his years like mine,
He too, I deem, implores the pow'rs divine:
For all mankind alike require their grace,
All born to want; a miſerable race!
He ſpake, and to her hand preferr'd the bowl:
A ſecret pleaſure touch'd Athena's ſoul,
To ſee the pref'rence due to ſacred age
Regarded ever by the juſt and ſage.
Of ocean's king ſhe then implores the grace.
Oh thou! whoſe arms this ample globe embrace,
Fulfil our wiſh, and let thy glory ſhine
On Neſtor firſt, and Neſtor's royal line;
Next grant the Pylian ſtates their juſt deſires,
Pleas'd with their hecatomb's aſcending fires;
Laſt deign Telemachus and me to bleſs,
And crown our voyage with deſir'd ſucceſs.
Thus ſhe; and having paid the rite divine,
Gave to Ulyſſes' ſon the roſy wine.
Suppliant he pray'd. And now the victims dreſt
They draw, divide, and celebrate the feaſt.

Ver. 74. *Laſt deign Telemachus and me to bleſs*——] Since Minerva here mentions the name of Telemachus in her prayer, how comes it to paſs, that Neſtor is at a loſs to know Telemachus? Minerva ſat cloſe by Neſtor; he muſt therefore be ſuppoſed to hear the prayer; and yet in the following lines he inquires who theſe ſtrangers are? We can ſcarce imagine Neſtor ignorant that the ſon of Ulyſſes was named Telemachus, there being ſo ſtrict a friendſhip between Neſtor and Ulyſſes. Perhaps therefore Minerva prayed in ſecret mentally; or perhaps Neſtor might not take notice of what was not addreſt immediately to him, and conſequently make inquiry about it for the greater certainty.

The

The banquet done, the narrative old man,
Thus mild, the pleaſing conference began.
Now, gentle gueſts! the genial banquet o'er,
It fits to aſk ye, what your native ſhore,
And whence your race? on what adventure, ſay,
Thus far ye wander thro' the wat'ry way?
Relate, if buſineſs, or the thirſt of gain,
Engage your journey o'er the pathleſs main:
Where ſavage pirates ſeek thro' ſeas unknown
The lives of others, vent'rous of their own.
Urge'd by the precepts by the goddeſs giv'n
And fill'd with confidence infus'd from heav'n,
The youth, whom Pallas deſtin'd to be wiſe
And fam'd among the ſons of men, replies.
Inquir'ſt thou, father! from what coaſt we came?
(Oh grace and glory of the Grecian name!)
From where high Ithaca o'erlooks the floods,
Brown with o'er-arching ſhades and pendent woods,
Us to theſe ſhores our filial duty draws,
A private ſorrow, not a public cauſe.
My ſire I ſeek, where-e'er the voice of fame
Has told the glories of his noble name,
The great Ulyſſes; fam'd from ſhore to ſhore
For valour much, for hardy ſuff'ring more.
Long time with thee before proud Ilion's wall
In arms he fought; with thee beheld her fall.

Ver. 86. *Relate, if buſineſs, or the thirſt of gain,* &c.] If we form our images of perſons and actions in ancient times, from the images of perſons and actions in modern ages, we ſhall fall into great miſtakes: thus in the preſent paſſage, if we annex the ſame idea of piracy, as it was practiſed three thouſand years paſt, to piracy as it is practiſed in our ages; what can be a greater affront than this inquiry of Neſtor? But, ſays Euſtathius, piracy was formerly not only accounted lawful, but honourable. I doubt not but Thucydides had this paſſage in view, when he ſays, that the ancient poets introduce men inquiring of thoſe who frequent the ſea, if they be pirates, as a thing no way ignominious.

Of

Of all the chiefs, this hero's fate alone
Has Jove reſerv'd, unheard of, and unknown;
Whether in fields by hoſtile fury ſlain,
Or ſunk by tempeſts in the gulfy main?
Of this to learn, oppreſt with tender fears,
Lo, at thy knee his ſuppliant ſon appears.
If or thy certain eye, or curious ear,
Have learnt his fate, the whole dark ſtory clear:
And oh! whate'er heav'n deſtin'd to betide,
Let neither flatt'ry ſmooth, nor pity hide.
Prepar'd I ſtand: he was but born to try
The lot of man; to ſuffer, and to die.
Oh then, if ever thro' the ten years war
The wiſe, the good Ulyſſes claim'd thy care;
If e'er he join'd thy council, or thy ſword,
True in his deed, and conſtant to his word;
Far as thy mind thro' backward time can ſee,
Search all thy ſtores of faithful memory:
'Tis ſacred truth I aſk, and aſk of thee.
To him experienc'd Neſtor thus rejoin'd.
O friend! what ſorrows doſt thou bring to mind?
Shall I the long, laborious ſcene review,
And open all the wounds of Greece anew?
What toils by ſea! where dark in queſt of prey
Dauntleſs we rov'd; Achilles led the way:

Ver. 125. *The ſpeech of Neſtor.*] Euſtathius obſerves the modeſty of Neſtor: Telemachus had aſcribed the fall of Troy in a great meaſure to Neſtor, but Neſtor ſpeaks not in particular of himſelf, but is content with his ſhare of glory in common with other warriors; he ſpeaks in the plural number, and joins all the Greeks as in the war, ſo in the glory of it. Neſtor mentions the ſufferings of the Greeks by ſea, as well as by land, during the ſiege of Troy: to underſtand this, it is neceſſary to remember, that the Greeks made many expeditions againſt other places during the war, both by ſea and land, as appears from many paſſages in the Iliad, particularly from what Achilles ſays in the ninth book.

What toils by land! where mix'd in fatal fight
Such numbers fell, such heroes sunk to night:
There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave,
There wise Patroclus, fill an early grave:
There too my son—ah once my best delight,
Once swift of foot, and terrible in fight,
In whom stern courage with soft virtue join'd,
A faultless body, and a blameless mind:
Antilochus——what more can I relate?
How trace the tedious series of our fate?
Not added years on years my task could close,
The long historian of my country's woes:
Back to thy native islands might'st thou sail,
And leave half-heard the melancholy tale.
Nine painful years on that detested shore;
What stratagems we form'd, what toils we bore;
Still lab'ring on, 'till scarce at last we found
Great Jove propitious, and our conquest crown'd.

Ver. 133. *There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave.*] I have observed, that the poet inserts into the Odyssey several incidents that happened after the fall of Troy, and by that method agreeably diversifies his poetry, and satisfies the curiosity of the reader. Eustathius remarks here, that he gives a title of honour to all the heroes he mentions, except only to Achilles. Achilles had been the occasion of the sufferings and death of many of the Greeks by his anger, and obstinacy in refusing to obey Agamemnon; therefore, while Nestor is lamenting the calamities of the Greeks, he passes over Achilles without any honourable mention, who had so greatly added to their sufferings. But I think this remark chimerical: one may as well say Achilles needed no epithet to distinguish him.

It is with pleasure I see the old man dwell upon the praise of Antilochus: the father enlarges upon the fame of the son; he gives him four epithets of glory, and while Ajax is only praised as a warrior, Antilochus is great and good, excellent in the standing fight, or swift to pursue an enemy. Longinus has observed upon the beauty of this passage.

Far o'er the reſt thy mighty father ſhin'd,
In wit, in prudence, and in force of mind.
Art thou the ſon of that illuſtrious ſire?
With joy I graſp thee, and with love admire.
So like your voices, and your words ſo wiſe,
Who finds thee younger muſt conſult his eyes.
Thy ſire and I were one; nor vary'd ought
In public ſentence, or in private thought;
Alike to council or th' aſſembly came,
With equal ſouls and ſentiments the ſame.
But when (by wiſdom won) proud Ilion burn'd,
And in their ſhips the conqu'ring Greeks return'd;
'Twas God's high will the victors to divide,
And turn th' event, confounding human pride:
Some he deſtroy'd, ſome ſcatter'd as the duſt,
(Not all were prudent, and not all were juſt)
Then Diſcord, ſent by Pallas from above,
Stern daughter of the great avenger Jove,
The brother-kings inſpir'd with fell debate;
Who call'd to council all th' Achaian ſtate,
But call'd untimely (not the ſacred rite
Obſerv'd, nor heedful of the ſetting light,
Nor herald ſworn the ſeſſion to proclaim)
Sour with debauch, a reeling tribe they came.
To theſe the cauſe of meeting they explain,
And Menelaus moves to croſs the main;

Ver. 149. *Far o'er the reſt thy mighty father ſhin'd.*] Neſtor ſpeaks of Ulyſſes as an inſeparable friend; and it ſhews an excellent diſpoſition in them both, to be rivals, and yet without envy. But the art of Neſtor is remarkable; he firſt gives the character to Ulyſſes of being ſuperior in wiſdom to all the Greeks; and yet at laſt he finds a way ſecretly to ſet himſelf on a level with him, if not above him: we ever, ſays he, thought the ſame thoughts, and were ever of the ſame ſentiments: which though it may imply that they were of equal wiſdom, yet there is room left for it to ſignify, that Ulyſſes always aſſented to the wiſdom of Neſtor. *Euſtath.*

Not

Not ſo the king of men: he will'd to ſtay;
The ſacred rites and hecatombs to pay,
And calm Minerva's wrath. Oh blind to fate!
The gods not lightly charge their love, or hate.
With ire-full taunts each other they oppoſe,
'Till in loud tumult all the Greeks aroſe.
Now diff'rent counſels ev'ry breaſt divide,
Each burns with rancour to the adverſe ſide:
Th' unquiet night ſtrange projects entertain'd;
(So Jove, that urge'd us to our fate, ordain'd.)
We, with the riſing morn our ſhips unmoor'd,
And brought our captives and our ſtores aboard;
But half the people with reſpect obey'd
The king of men, and at his bidding ſtay'd.
Now on the wings of winds our courſe we keep,
(For God had ſmooth'd the waters of the deep)
For Tenedos we ſpread our eager oars,
There land, and pay due victims to the pow'rs:
To bleſs our ſafe return we join in pray'r,
But angry Jove diſpers'd our vows in air,
And rais'd new diſcord. Then (ſo heav'n decreed)
Ulyſſes firſt and Neſtor diſagreed:
Wiſe as he was, by various counſels ſway'd,
He there, tho' late, to pleaſe the monarch, ſtay'd.
But I, determin'd, ſtem the foamy floods,
Warn'd of the coming fury of the gods.

With

Ver. 197. *Wiſe as he was, by various counſels ſway'd,*
He there, tho' late, to pleaſe the monarch, ſtay'd.]
It is with great addreſs that Neſtor relates the return of Ulyſſes to Agamemnon; he aſcribes it not directly to Ulyſſes, but to his aſſociates in the voyage; he mollifies it, in complaiſance to Telemachus. But Neſtor, according to Dacier, conceals the true reaſon of his return; it was not to pleaſe Agamemnon, but out of fear of the goddeſs Minerva, whoſe ſtatue he had taken by force from Troy: to appeaſe that goddeſs, he returns to join in ſacrifice with Agamemnon. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 200. *Warn'd of the coming fury of the gods.*] It may be aſked

With us, Tydides fear'd and urge'd his haſte:
And Menelaus came, but came the laſt.
He join'd our veſſels in the Leſbian bay,
While yet we doubted of our wat'ry way;
If to the right to urge the pilot's toil,
(The ſafer road) beſides the Pſyrian iſle;
Or the ſtreight courſe to rocky Chios plow,
And anchor under Mimas' ſhaggy brow?
We ſought direction of the pow'r divine:
The god propitious gave the guiding ſign;
Thro' the mid ſeas he bids our navy ſteer,
And in Eubœa ſhun the woes we fear.
The whiſtling winds already wak'd the ſky;
Before the whiſtling winds the veſſels fly,
With rapid ſwiftneſs cut the liquid way,
And reach Gereſtus at the point of day.
There hecatombs of bulls, to Neptune ſlain,
High flaming pleaſe the monarch of the main.
The fourth day ſhone, when all their labours o'er
Tydides' veſſel touch'd the wiſh'd-for ſhore:
But I to Pylos ſcud before the gales,
The god ſtill breathing on the ſwelling ſails;
Sep'rate from all, I ſafely landed here;
Their fates or fortunes never reach'd my ear.

how Neſtor attained this knowledge of the evils which the gods were preparing? Euſtathius aſcribes it to his great wiſdom, which gave him an inſight into futurity. Dacier with more reaſon tells us, that Neſtor knew that Minerva had been offended, and might conſequently apprehend a puniſhment was to be inflicted for the offence.

Ver. 221. *But I to Pylos*, &c.] Euſtathius obſerves from the antients, that the poet with great judgement ſuſpends, and breaks off this relation of Neſtor; by this method he has an opportunity to carry Telemachus to other countries, and inſert into his poem the ſtory of Menelaus and Helen: this method likewiſe gives an air of probability to what he writes; the poet ſeems afraid to deceive, and when he ſends Telemachus to other parts for better intelligence, he ſeems to conſult truth and exactneſs.

Yet

Yet what I learn'd, attend; as here I ſat,
And aſk'd each voyager each hero's fate;
Curious to know, and willing to relate.
Safe reach'd the Myrmidons their native land,
Beneath Achilles' warlike ſon's command.
Thoſe, whom the heir of great Apollo's art,
Brave Philoctetes, taught to wing the dart;
And thoſe whom Idomen from Ilion's plain
Had led, ſecurely croſt the dreadful main.
How Agamemnon touch'd his Argive coaſt,
And how his life by fraud and force he loſt,
And how the murd'rer paid his forfeit breath;
What lands ſo diſtant from that ſcene of death
But trembling heard the fame? and heard admire
How well the ſon appeas'd his ſlaughter'd ſire!
Ev'n to th' unhappy, that unjuſty bleed,
Heav'n gives poſterity, t'avenge the deed.
So fell Ægyſthus; and may thou, my friend,
(On whom the virtues of thy ſire deſcend)
Make future times thy equal act adore,
And be what brave Oreſtes was before!
The prudent youth reply'd. O thou the grace
And laſting glory of the Grecian race!

Ver. 229. *Achilles' warlike ſon.*] The ſon of Achilles was named Neoptolemus, by others Pyrrhus; his ſtory is this: when he had reached Theſſaly with the Myrmidons of Achilles, by the advice of Thetis he ſet fire to his veſſels; and, being warned by Helenus, from the oracles, to fix his habitation where he found a houſe whoſe foundations were iron, whoſe walls were wood, and whoſe roof was wool; he took his journey on foot, and, coming to a certain lake of Epirus, he found ſome perſons fixing their ſpears with the point downwards into the earth, and covering the tops of them with their cloaks, and after this manner making their tents: he looked upon the oracle as fulfilled, and dwelt there. Aftewards having a ſon by Andromache the wife of Hector, he named him Moloſſus, from whom the region took the name of Moloſſia. From this country are the Moloſſi canes, mentioned by Virgil. *Euſtathius.*

Juſt was the vengeance, and to lateſt days
Shall long poſterity reſound the praiſe.
Some god this arm with equal proweſs bleſs!
And the proud ſuitors ſhall its force confeſs:
Injurious men! who while my ſoul is ſore
Of freſh affronts, are meditating more.
But heav'n denies this honour to my hand,
Nor ſhall my father repoſſeſs the land:
The father's fortune never to return,
And the ſad ſon's to ſuffer and to mourn!
Thus he; and Neſtor took the word: My ſon,
Is it then true, as diſtant rumours run,
That crowds of rivals for thy mother's charms
Thy palace fill with inſults and alarms?
Say, is the fault, tho' tame ſubmiſſion, thine?
Or leagu'd againſt thee, do thy people join,
Mov'd by ſome oracle, or voice divine?
And yet who knows, but ripening lies in fate
An hour of vengeance for th' afflicted ſtate;
When great Ulyſſes ſhall ſuppreſs theſe harms,
Ulyſſes ſingly, or all Greece in arms.

Ver. 268. *Ulyſſes ſingly, or all Greece in arms.*] The poet ſhews his great judgement in preparing the reader for the deſtruction of the ſuitors; that great cataſtrophe is managed by few hands, and it might ſeem incredible that ſo few could deſtroy ſo many: the poet therefore, to give an air of truth to his action, frequently inculcates the aſſiſtance of Pallas, which muſt at leaſt ſhew, that ſuch a great exploit is not impoſſible to be executed by ſtratagems and valour: it is by art, not ſtrength, that Ulyſſes conquers.

All Greece in arms.

This is ſpoken in a general ſenſe, and comprehends not only the ſubjects of Ulyſſes, or even the Pylians and Spartans, but implies, that all the Greeks would riſe in the cauſe of Ulyſſes. What the ſuitors had ſpoken ſcoffingly in the preceding book, that Telemachus was ſailing to Pyle or Sparta for ſupplies, appears in this not to be impracticable; ſo that it was choice and not neceſſity that determined the poet to make uſe of no ſuch eaſy expedients for the deſtruction of the ſuitors. *Euſtathius.*

But

But if Athena, war's triumphant maid,
The happy ſon, will, as the father, aid,
(Whoſe fame and ſafety was her conſtant care
In ev'ry danger and in ev'ry war:
Never on man did heav'nly favour ſhine
With rays ſo ſtrong, diſtinguiſh'd and divine,
As thoſe with which Minerva mark'd thy ſire)
So might ſhe love thee, ſo thy ſoul inſpire!
Soon ſhou'd their hopes in humble duſt be laid,
And long oblivion of the bridal bed.
Ah! no ſuch hope (the prince with ſighs replies)
Can touch my breaſt; that bleſſing heav'n denies.
Ev'n by celeſtial favour were it giv'n,
Fortune or fate wou'd croſs the will of heav'n.
What words are theſe, and what imprudence thine?
(Thus interpos'd the martial maid divine)
Forgetful youth! but know, the pow'r above
With eaſe can ſave each object of his love;
Wide as his will, extends his boundleſs grace;
Nor loſt in time, nor circumſcrib'd by place.
Happier his lot, who many ſorrows paſt.
Long lab'ring gains his natal ſhore at laſt;
Then

Ver. 282. *Fortune or fate would croſs the will of heav'n.*] It may be aſked how an expreſſion ſo near blaſphemy, as Euſtathius obſerves, could eſcape a perſon of ſuch piety as Telemachus? It is true, the poet makes Minerva herſelf correct it; but yet the objection remains, viz. how could Telemachus ſpeak it? I think ſince the poet himſelf condemns it, we may give it up as an indecency in Telemachus; it is natural for men in deſpair (and that was the condition of Telemachus), to uſe a vehemence of expreſſion, and this might tranſport Telemachus beyond the bounds of prudence. The only poſſible way that occurs to me to take off the impiety, is to have recourſe to deſtiny: it was the opinion of the antients, that the gods could not alter deſtiny: and then Telemachus may mean no more, than that it was decreed by the deſtinies that Ulyſſes ſhould return no more.

Ver. 289. *Happier his lot, who,* &c.] Nothing can be better imagined

Then who too ſpeedy, haſtes to end his life
By ſome ſtern ruffian, or adult'rous wife.
Death only is the lot which none can miſs,
And all is poſſible to heav'n, but this.
The beſt, the deareſt fav'rite of the ſky
Muſt taſte that cup, for man is born to die.
Thus check'd, reply'd Ulyſſes prudent heir:
Mentor, no more — the mournful thought forbear;
For he no more muſt draw his country's breath,
Already ſnatch'd by fate, and the black doom of death!
Paſs we to other ſubjects; and engage
On themes remote the venerable ſage:

(Who

gined to encourage Telemachus, than what the poet here delivers: Minerva ſets Agamemnon in oppoſition to Ulyſſes: Agamemnon made a ſpeedy voyage to his country, and there fell by treachery; Ulyſſes has long been abſent, but yet is happier than Agamemnon: the gods perhaps reſerve him for better fortunes, at leaſt nothing can be concluded from his long abſence, and this is ſufficient to teach Telemachus not to deſpair. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 294. *And all is poſſible to heav'n, but this.*] What Minerva here ſays juſtifies the remark I made, that what Telemachus ſeemed to have ſpoken raſhly, may be ſoftened, if not vindicated, by having recourſe to deſtiny: it is evident from this paſſage, that deſtiny was ſuperior to the power of the gods: otherwiſe Minerva ſpeaks as blaſphemouſly as Telemachus: for what difference is there between ſaying, that the gods could not preſerve even thoſe they love from death, and ſaying that the gods could not ſave Ulyſſes? Why therefore may not the words of Telemachus be thought to have a reſpect to deſtiny?

Ver. 301. *Paſs we to other ſubjects;*——] Telemachus here puts ſeveral queſtions, as it were in a breath, to Neſtor; and Plutarch obſerves upon this paſſage, that he who enquires any thing of an old man, though the old man himſelf has no concern in the ſtory, wins his heart at once; and incites a perſon, who is upon all occaſions very willing to diſcourſe. He introduces this as an inſtance of the art Telemachus uſes, in adapting himſelf by his queſtions to the temper of the perſon with whom he converſes: he puts together, continues he, ſeveral queſtions upon ſeveral ſubjects, which

is

(Who thrice has ſeen the periſhable kind
Of men decay, and thro' three ages ſhin'd,
Like gods majeſtic, and like gods in mind.)
For much he knows, and juſt concluſions draws
From various precedents, and various laws.
O ſon of Neleus! awful Neſtor, tell
How he, the mighty Agamemnon fell?
By what ſtrange fraud Ægyſthus wrought, relate,
(By force he could not) ſuch a hero's fate?
Liv'd Menelaus not in Greece! or where
Was then the martial brother's pious care?
Condemn'd perhaps ſome foreign ſhore to tread;
Or ſure Ægyſthus had not dar'd the deed.
To whom the full of days. Illuſtrious youth,
Attend (tho' partly thou haſt gueſt) the truth.
For had the martial Menelaus found
The ruffian breathing yet on Argive ground;

is more judicious than to confine his anſwer to a ſingle interrogatory, and by that method deprive Neſtor of one of the moſt pleaſant enjoyments of old age, I mean the pleaſure of talking. *Plutarch. Sympoſiac.*

Ver. 303. *Who thrice had ſeen the periſhable kind*
Of men decay.———]

The poet here tells us that Neſtor was now in his fourth generation: Ovid took the word γένεα to ſignify an hundred years; but then Neſtor muſt have been above three hundred years old. Others with more probability underſtand it to ſignify a generation, or ſuch a portion of time in which any race of men flouriſh together, which is computed to be about thirty years. I refer the reader to the note of the 333d verſe of the firſt book of the Iliad, for the particular age of Neſtor. According to that computation, he muſt now be about ninety five years of age.

Ver. 309. *How he, the mighty Agamemnon fell?*] Telemachus does not aſk this queſtion out of curioſity, but with great judgement; he knows there were deſigns againſt his life, as well as there had been againſt Agamemnon; he therefore aſks it, that he may learn how to defeat them; chiefly to inſtruct himſelf how beſt to aſſiſt his father upon his return, by aiding him in eſcaping the ſnares of the ſuitors. *Dacier.*

Nor

Nor earth had hid his carcaſe from the ſkies,
Nor Grecian virgins ſhriek'd his obſequies,
But fowls obſcene diſmember'd his remains,
And dogs had torn him on the naked plains.
While us the works of bloody Mars employ'd,
The wanton youth inglorious peace enjoy'd;
He, ſtretch'd at eaſe in Argos' calm receſs,
(Whoſe ſtately ſteeds luxuriant paſtures bleſs)
With flattery's inſinuating art
Sooth'd the frail queen, and poiſon'd all her heart.
At firſt with worthy ſhame and decent pride,
The royal dame his lawleſs ſuit deny'd.
For virtue's image yet poſſeſt her mind,
Taught by a maſter of the tuneful kind:
Atrides, parting for the Trojan war,
Conſign'd the youthful conſort to his care.
True to his charge, the bard preſerv'd her long
In honour's limits; ſuch the pow'r of ſong.
But when the gods theſe objects of their hate
Dragg'd to deſtruction, by the links of fate;
The bard they baniſh'd from his native ſoil,
And left all helpleſs in a deſert iſle:
There he, the ſweeteſt of the ſacred train,
Sung dying to the rocks, but ſung in vain.

Ver. 333. *Taught by a maſter of the tuneful kind.*] Homer through the whole Odyſſey ſpeaks much in honour of the art which he himſelf loved, and in which he ſo eminently excelled: from theſe and other paſſages we may learn the ſtate of poetry in thoſe ages: "Poets (ſays Euſtathius) were ranked in the claſs of philoſophers; "and the ancients made uſe of them as preceptors in muſic and "morality:" Strabo quotes this very paſſage as an inſtance of the excellence of poetry in forming the ſoul to worthy actions: Ægyſthus could not debauch Clytemneſtra, until he baniſhed the poet who was her guide and inſtructor.

Then

Then virtue was no more; her guard away,
She fell, to luſt a voluntary prey.
Ev'n to the temple ſtalk'd th' adult'rous ſpouſe,
With impious thanks and mockery of vows,
With images, with garments, and with gold;
And od'rous fumes from loaded altars roll'd.
Meantime from flaming Troy we cut the way,
With Menelaus, thro' the curling ſea.
But when to Sunium's ſacred point we came,
Crown'd with the temple of th' Athenian dame;
Atrides' pilot, Phrontes, there expir'd;
(Phrontes, of all the ſons of men admir'd
To ſteer the bounding bark with ſteady toil,
When the ſtorm thickens, and the billows boil)
While yet he exercis'd the ſteerman's art,
Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart;
Ev'n with the rudder in his hand he fell.
To pay whoſe honours to the ſhades of hell,
We check'd our haſte, by pious office bound,
And laid our old companion in the ground.

Ver. 344. *Then virtue was no more; her guard away,*
She fell———]

There is a fine moral couched in the ſtory of the bard and Clytemneſtra; it admirably paints the advantage we draw from wiſe companions for the improvement of our virtues: Clytemneſtra was chaſte, becauſe her inſtructor was wiſe: his wiſdom was an inſuperable guard to her modeſty. It was long before ſhe yielded; virtue and honour had a long conteſt; but ſhe no ſooner yielded to adultery, but ſhe aſſiſted in the murder of her huſband; from whence we may draw another moral, that one vice betrays us into another: and when once the fences of honour are thrown down, we become a prey to every paſſion. *Dacier.*

Ver. 346. *Ev'n to the temple ſtalk'd th' adult'rous ſpouſe.*] Here is a ſurpriſing mixture of religion and impiety: Ægyſthus, upon the accompliſhment of ſo great a crime as adultery, returns thanks to the gods by oblations, as if they had aſſiſted him in the execution of it. Neſtor dwells upon it at large, to ſhew that Ægyſthus greatly aggravated his guilt by ſuch a piece of impious devotion. *Dacier.*

And

And now the rites diſcharge'd, our courſe we keep
Far on the gloomy boſom of the deep:
Soon as Malæa's miſty tops ariſe,
Sudden the Thund'rer blackens all the ſkies,
And the winds whiſtle, and the ſurges roll
Mountains on mountains, and obſcure the pole.
The tempeſt ſcatters, and divides our fleet;
Part, the ſtorm urges on the coaſt of Crete,
Where winding round the rich Cydonian plain,
The ſtreams of Jardan iſſue to the main.
There ſtands a rock, high eminent and ſteep,
Whoſe ſhaggy brow o'erhangs the ſhady deep,
And views Gortyna on the weſtern ſide;
On this rough Auſter drove th' impetuous tide;
With broken force the billows roll'd away,
And heav'd the fleet into the neighb'ring bay,
Thus ſav'd from death, they gain'd the Phæſtan ſhores,
With ſhatter'd veſſels, and diſabled oars:
But five tall barks the winds and waters toſt,
Far from their fellows on the Ægyptian coaſt.
There wander'd Menelaus thro' foreign ſhores,
Amaſſing gold, and gath'ring naval ſtores;
While curſt Ægyſthus the deteſted deed
By fraud fulfill'd, and his great brother bled.
Sev'n years, the traitor rich Mycenæ ſway'd,
And his ſtern rule the groaning land obey'd;

Ver. 371. *Part, the ſtorm urges on the coaſt of Crete.*] Homer does not amuſe us by relating what became of theſe companions of Menelaus; he omits this judiciouſly, and follows the thread of his ſtory: Menelaus is the perſon whom the poet has in view; he therefore paſſes over the ſtory of his companions, to carry on the fable of the poem by leading us directly to Menelaus.

Ver. 383. ——*On th' Ægyptian coaſt.*] In the original it is, "The wind and water carried them to Ægyptus." Homer by Ægyptus means the river Nile, and then it is always uſed in the maſculine gender; the region about it took its name from the river Ægyptus; this is always uſed in the feminine gender: but the country had not received that name in the days of Homer. *Euſtath.*

The eighth, from Athens to his realm reſtor'd,
Oreſtes brandiſh'd the revenging ſword,
Slew the dire pair, and gave to fun'ral flame
The vile aſſaſſin, and adult'rous dame.
That day, ere yet the bloody triumphs ceaſe,
Return'd Atrides to the coaſt of Greece,
And ſafe to Argos' port his navy brought,
With gifts of price and pond'rous treaſure fraught.
Hence warn'd, my ſon beware! nor idly ſtand
Too long a ſtranger to thy native land;
Leſt heedleſs abſence wear thy wealth away,
While lawleſs feaſters in thy palace ſway;
Perhaps may ſeize thy realm, and ſhare the ſpoil;
And thou return, with diſappointed toil,
From thy vain journey, to a rifled iſle.
Howe'er, my friend, indulge one labour more,
And ſeek Atrides on the Spartan ſhore.
He, wand'ring long, a wider circle made,
And many-language'd nations has ſurvey'd;
And meaſur'd tracts unknown to other ſhips,
Amid the monſtrous wonders of the deeps;
(A length of ocean and unbounded ſky,
Which ſcarce the ſea fowl in a year o'erfly)

Go

Ver. 411. *A length of ocean and unbounded ſky,*
Which ſcarce the ſea fowl in a year o'erfly.]

It muſt be confeſt, that Neſtor greatly exaggerates this deſcription: Homer himſelf tells us, that a ſhip may ſail in five days from Crete to Ægypt; wherefore then this hyperbole of Neſtor? It might perhaps be to deter Telemachus from a deſign of ſailing to Crete, and he through his inexperience might believe the deſcription. It may be added, that what Neſtor ſpeaks concerning the flight of birds, may be only ſaid to ſhew the great diſtance of that ſea: nay, by a favourable interpretation it may be reconciled to truth; the meaning then muſt be this: ſhould a perſon obſerve that ſea a whole year, he would not ſee one bird flying over it, both becauſe of the vaſtneſs and dreadfulneſs of it; and perhaps the whole of

Go then; to Sparta take the wat'ry way,
Thy ſhip and ſailors but for orders ſtay!
Or if by land thou chuſe thy courſe to bend,
My ſteeds, my chariots, and my ſons attend:
Thee to Atrides they ſhall ſafe convey,
Guides of thy road, companions of thy way.
Urge him with truth to frame his free replies,
And ſure he will: for Menelaus is wiſe.
Thus while he ſpeaks, the ruddy ſun deſcends,
And twilight grey her ev'ning ſhade extends.
Then thus the blue-ey'd maid: O full of days!
Wiſe are thy words, and juſt are all thy ways.
Now immolate the tongues, and mix the wine,
Sacred to Neptune and the pow'rs divine.
The lamp of day is quench'd beneath the deep,
And ſoft approach the balmy hours of ſleep:
Nor fits it to prolong the heavenly feaſt,
Timeleſs, indecent, but retire to reſt.
So ſpake Jove's daughter, the celeſtial maid.
The ſober train attended and obey'd.
The ſacred heralds on their hands around
Pour'd the full urns; the youths the goblets crown'd:
From bowl to bowl the holy bev'rage flows;
While to the final ſacrifice they roſe.
The tongues they caſt upon the fragrant flame,
And pour, above, the conſecrated ſtream.
And now, their thirſt by copious draughts allay'd,
The youthful hero and th' Athenian maid

this might ariſe from the obſervation, that this ſea is not frequented by birds. This is wholly and almoſt literally taken from Euſtathius; and if we add to this the ignorance of the ſea and ſea-affairs in thoſe ages, we ſhall the leſs wonder to hear ſo wiſe a man as Neſtor deſcribing it with ſo much terror. Navigation is now greatly improved, and the moderns ſail further in a month, than the ancients could in a year; their whole art conſiſting chiefly in coaſting along the ſhores, and conſequently they made but little way.

Propoſe

Propoſe departure from the finiſh'd rite,
And in their hollow bark to paſs the night:
But this the hoſpitable ſage deny'd.
Forbid it, Jove! and all the gods! he cry'd,
Thus from my walls the much-lov'd ſon to ſend
Of ſuch a hero, and of ſuch a friend!
Me, as ſome needy peaſant, would ye leave,
Whom heav'n denies the bleſſing to relieve?
Me would you leave, who boaſt imperial ſway,
When beds of royal ſtate invite your ſtay?
N —long as life this mortal ſhall inſpire,
Or as my children imitate their ſire,
Here ſhall the wand'ring ſtranger find his home,
And hoſpitable rites adorn the dome.

Ver. 450. *When beds of royal ſtate invite your ſtay?*] This paſſage gives us a full inſight into the manners of theſe hoſpitable ages; they not only kept a treaſury for bowls or vaſes of gold or ſilver, to give as ξεινήια, or gifts of hoſpitality, but alſo a wardrobe of various habits and rich furniture, to lodge and beſtow upon ſtrangers. Euſtathius relates, that Tellias of Agrigentum was a perſon of ſo great hoſpitality, that five hundred horſemen coming to his houſe in the winter ſeaſon, he entertained them, and gave every man a cloak and a tunic. This laudable cuſtom prevailed, and ſtill prevails, in the eaſtern countries: it was the practice of Abraham of old, and is at this day of the Turks, as we may learn from their caravanſeras, erected for the reception of travellers. And yet Dacier obſerves, that a French critic has ſhewed ſo ill a taſte as to ridicule this paſſage. "Telemachus (ſays that author) being entertained by Neſtor, intimates his intention of returning to lodge "on ſhip-board with his companions: but Neſtor detains him, by "aſking him if he thought he had not quilts or coverlets to give "him a night's lodging: upon this Telemachus goes to bed in a "reſounding gallery, and Neſtor in a bed which his wife made "ready for him." The nobleſt things are moſt liable to burleſque, by perverting their meaning; as ſome pictures, by varying the poſition, repreſent a man or a monſter. He is very ſevere upon the reſounding gallery, which in truth means no more than very lofty or elevated, and by conſequence very noble and magnificent.

Well haſt thou ſpoke (the blue-ey'd maid replies)
Belov'd old man! benevolent, as wiſe.
Be the kind dictates of thy heart obey'd,
And let thy words Telemachus perſuade:
He to thy palace ſhall thy ſteps purſue?
I to the ſhip, to give the orders due,
Preſcribe directions, and confirm the crew.
For I alone ſuſtain their naval cares,
Who boaſt experience from theſe ſilver hairs;
All youths, the reſt, whom to this journey move
Like years, like tempers, and their prince's love.
There in the veſſel ſhall I paſs the night;
And ſoon as morning paints the fields of light,
I go to challenge from the Caucons bold,
A debt, contracted in the days of old.
But this thy gueſt, receiv'd with friendly care,
Let thy ſtrong courſers ſwift to Sparta bear;

Ver. 468. *I go to challenge from the Caucons.*] The poet makes a double uſe of theſe words of the goddeſs; ſhe gives an air of probability to her excuſe, why ſhe ſhould not be preſſed to ſtay; and at the ſame time Homer avoids the abſurdity of introducing that goddeſs at Sparta; Menelaus and Helen are celebrating the nuptials of their ſon and daughter: Minerva is a virgin deity, and conſequently an enemy to all nuptial ceremonies. *Euſtathius.*

But it may be neceſſary to obſerve who theſe Caucons are: we find in the tenth book of the Iliad, the Caucons mentioned as auxiliaries to Troy: there Dolon ſays,

> The Carians, Caucons, the Pelaſgian hoſt,
> And Leleges encamp along the coaſt.

Are theſe Caucons the ſame with thoſe here mentioned? Euſtathius informs us, that there was a people of Triphyly, between Elis and Pylos, named Caucons: but Strabo ſays, that the whole race is now extinct, and that theſe here mentioned are of Dymæa, and take their name from the river Caucon: whereas thoſe in the Iliad are Paphlagonians: they were a wandering nation, and conſequently might be the ſame people originally, and retain the ſame name in different countries.

Prepare

Prepare thy chariot at the dawn of day,
And be thy ſon companion of his way.
  Then turning with the word, Minerva flies,
And ſoars an eagle thro' the liquid ſkies.
Viſion divine! the throng'd ſpectators gaze
In holy wonder fixt, and ſtill amaze
But chief the rev'rend ſage admir'd; he took
The hand of young Telemachus, and ſpoke,
  Oh happy youth! and favour'd of the ſkies,
Diſtinguiſh'd care of guardian deities!
Whoſe early years for future worth engage,
No vulgar manhood, no ignoble age.
For lo! none other of the court above
Than ſhe, the daughter of almighty Jove,
Pallas herſelf, the war triumphant maid,
Confeſt is thine, as once thy father's aid.
So guide me, goddeſs! ſo propitious ſhine
On me, my conſort, and my royal line!
A yearling bullock to thy name ſhall ſmoke,
Untam'd, unconſcious of the galling yoke,
With ample forehead, and yet tender horns,
Whoſe budding honours ductile gold adorns.
  Submiſſive thus the hoary ſire preferr'd
His holy vow: the fav'ring goddeſs heard.
Then ſlowly riſing, o'er the ſandy ſpace
Precedes the father, follow'd by his race,
(A long proceſſion) timely marching home
In comely order to the regal dome.
There when arriv'd, on thrones around him place'd,
His ſons and grandſons the wide circle grace'd.
To theſe the hoſpitable ſage, in ſign
Of ſocial welcome, mix'd the racy wine,
(Late from the mellowing caſk reſtor'd to light,
By ten long years refin'd, and roſy bright.)
To Pallas high the foaming bowl he crown'd,
And ſprinkled large libations on the ground.

Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
And to the gifts of balmy ſleep repairs.
Deep in a rich alcove the prince was laid,
And ſlept beneath the pompous colonade;
Faſt by his ſide Piſiſtratus lay ſpread,
(In age his equal) on a ſplendid bed:
But in an inner court, ſecurely clos'd,
The rev'rend Neſtor and his queen repos'd.

When now Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
With roſy luſtre purpled o'er the lawn;
The old man early roſe, walk'd forth, and ſat
On poliſh'd ſtone before his palace gate:
With unguents ſmooth the lucid marble ſhone,
Where ancient Neleus ſat, a ruſtic throne,
But he deſcending to th' infernal ſhade,
Sage Neſtor fill'd it, and the ſcepter ſway'd.
His ſons around him mild obeiſance pay,
And duteous take the orders of the day.
Firſt Echephron and Stratius quit their bed;
Then Perſeus, Aretus, and Thraſymed;
The laſt Piſiſtratus aroſe from reſt:
They came, and near him place'd the ſtranger gueſt.

Ver. 518. ——— *And ſat on poliſh'd ſtone before his palace gate.*] We have here an ancient cuſtom recorded by the poet; a king places himſelf before the gate of his palace upon a ſeat of marble, worn ſmooth by long uſe, ſays Euſtathius, or perhaps ſmoothed exquiſitely by the hand of the workman. What I would chiefly obſerve is, that they placed themſelves thus in public for the diſpatch of juſtice: we read in the Scripture of judges "ſitting in the gate."

Ver. 528. *Piſiſtratus.*] Would I indulge my fancy in a conjecture, I might ſuppoſe that the famous tyrant Piſiſtratus was deſcended, or borrowed his name from this ſon of Neſtor. Herodotus informs us, as Euſtathius obſerves, that all the Piſiſtrati were originally Pylians. If this be true, we have a very ſtrong evidence that Homer is not all fiction, but that he celebrates the great men of thoſe ages with reality, and only embelliſhes the true ſtory with the ornaments of poetry.

To

To theſe the ſenior thus declar'd his will:
My ſons! the dictates of your ſire fulfil.
To Pallas, firſt of gods, prepare the feaſt,
Who grace'd our rites, a more than mortal gueſt.
Let one diſpatchful, bid ſome ſwain to lead
A well-fed bullock from the graſſy mead;
One ſeek the harbour where the veſſels moor,
And bring thy friends, Telemachus! aſhore,
(Leave only two the galley to attend)
Another to Laerceus muſt we ſend,
Artiſt divine, whoſe ſkilful hands infold
The victim's horn with circumfuſile gold.
The reſt may here the pious duty ſhare,
And bid the handmaids for the feaſt prepare,
The ſeats to range, the fragrant wood to bring,
And limpid waters from the living ſpring.
He ſaid, and buſy each his care beſtow'd;
Already at the gates the bullock low'd,
Already came the Ithacenſian crew,
The dext'rous ſmith the tools already drew:
His pond'rous hammer, and his anvil ſound,
And his ſtrong tongs to turn the metal round.

Ver. 540. *Laerceus——artiſt divine*, &c.] The author of the parallel quotes this paſſage to prove, that Homer was ignorant of the mechanic arts: we have here, ſays he, a gilder with his anvil and hammer; but what occaſion has he for an anvil and hammer in the art of a gilder? Boileau has excellently vindicated Homer from this objection, in his reflections upon Longinus; this gilder was a gold-beater: Neſtor, we ſee, furniſhed the gold, and he beat it into leaves, ſo that he had occaſion to make uſe of his anvil and hammer; the anvil was portable, becauſe the work was not laborious. Our modern travellers aſſure us, that it is at this day the practice in the eaſtern regions, as in Perſia, &c. for the artiſts in metals to carry about with them the whole implements of trade, to the houſe of the perſons where they find employment; it is therefore a full vindication of Homer, to obſerve that the gold this artiſt uſed in gilding, was nothing but gold beat into fine leaves.

Nor

Nor was Minerva abſent from the rite,
She view'd her honours, and enjoy'd the ſight.
With rev'rend hand the king preſents the gold,
Which round th' intorted horns the gilder roll'd;
So wrought, as Pallas might with pride behold.
Young Aretus from forth his bridal bow'r
Brought the full laver, o'er their hands to pour,
And caniſters of conſecrated flour.
Stratius and Echephron the victim led;
The ax was held by warlike Thraſymed,
In act to ſtrike: before him Perſeus ſtood,
The vaſe extending to receive the blood.
The king himſelf initiates to the pow'r;
Scatters with quiv'ring hand the ſacred flour,
And the ſtream ſprinkles: from the curling brows
The hair collected in the fire he throws.
Soon as due vows on ev'ry part were paid,
And ſacred wheat upon the victim laid,
Strong Thraſymed diſcharge'd the ſpeeding blow
Full on his neck, and cut the nerves in two.
Down ſunk the heavy beaſt: the females round,
Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a ſhrilling ſound.

Ver. 560. *Stratius and Echephron, &c.*] Neſtor here makes uſe only of the miniſtry of his ſons; the reaſon of it is, becauſe it was reckoned honourable to ſerve in the performance of ſacrifice, this being in ſome ſenſe an attending upon the gods: or becauſe it was the practice of thoſe ages for great perſons to do thoſe offices with their own hands, which in the latter have been performed by ſervants.

Euſtathius reports a ſaying of Antigonus, who obſerving his ſon behaving himſelf imperiouſly to his ſubjects, "Know'ſt thou "not," ſays he, "that royalty itſelf is but illuſtrious ſervitude!" An intimation that he himſelf was but a ſervant of the public, and therefore ſhould uſe his ſervants with moderation.

But the true reaſon of Neſtor's aſſiſting in the ſacrifice is, becauſe kings anciently had the inſpection of religion, and prieſthood was joined to royalty, according to that of Virgil,

"Rex Anius, rex idem hominum Phœbique ſacerdos."

Nor

Nor ſcorn'd the queen the holy choir to join,
(The firſt-born ſhe, of old Clymenus' line;
In youth by Neſtor lov'd, of ſpotleſs fame,
And lov'd in age, Eurydice her name.)
From earth they rear him, ſtruggling now with death;
And Neſtor's youngeſt ſtops the vents of breath.
The ſoul for ever flies: on all ſides round
Streams the black blood, and ſmokes upon the ground.
The beaſt they then divide, and diſunite
The ribs and limbs, obſervant of the rite:
On theſe, in double cawls involv'd with art,
The choiceſt morſels lay from ev'ry part.
The ſacred ſage before his altar ſtands,
Turns the burnt-off'ring with his holy hands,
And pours the wine, and bids the flames aſpire:
The youth with inſtruments ſurround the fire.
The thighs now ſacrifice'd, and entrails dreſt,
Th' aſſiſtants part, transfix, and broil the reſt.
While theſe officious tend the rites divine,
The laſt fair branch of the Neſtorean line,
Sweet Polycaſte, took the pleaſing toil
To bathe the prince, and pour the fragrant oil.

O'er

Ver. 594. *Sweet Polycaſte, took the pleaſing toil*
To bathe the prince, &c.]

It is very neceſſary to ſay ſomething about this practice of women bathing and anointing men; it frequently occurs through the whole Odyſſey, and is ſo contrary to the uſage of the moderns, as to give offence to modeſty; neither is this done by women of inferior quality, but we have here a young princeſs, bathing, anointing, and cloathing the naked Telemachus. Euſtathius indeed tells us, it was undoubtedly by her father's command: but if it was a piece of immodeſty, it does not ſolve the objection, whoever commanded it. I confeſs it would be immodeſt in theſe ages of the world, and the only excuſe that occurs to me is, to ſay that cuſtom eſtabliſhed it. It is in manners, in ſome degree, as in dreſs; if a faſhion never ſo indecent prevails, yet no perſon is ridiculous, becauſe it is faſhionable: ſo in manners, if a practice prevails univerſally, though

O'er his fair limbs a flow'ry veſt he threw,
And iſſu'd, like a god, to mortal view.
His former ſeat beſide the king he found,
(His people's father with his peers around)
All place'd at eaſe the holy banquet join,
And in the dazzling goblet laughs the wine.
The rage of thirſt and hunger now ſuppreſt,
The monarch turns him to his royal gueſt;
And for the promis'd journey bids prepare
The ſmooth-hair'd horſes, and the rapid car.
Obſervant of his word; the word ſcarce ſpoke,
The ſons obey, and join them to the yoke.
Then bread and wine a ready handmaid brings,
And preſents, ſuch as ſuit the ſtate of kings.
The glitt'ring ſeat Telemachus aſcends;
His faithful guide Piſiſtratus attends;

With

though not reconcileable to real modeſty, yet no perſon can be ſaid to be immodeſt who comes into it, becauſe it is agreeable to the cuſtom of the times and countries.

Ver. 610, &c. *The concluſion of the book.*] I ſhall lay together what I have further to obſerve on the concluſion of this book: it is remarkable, that the poet does not amuſe himſelf in deſcribing the preſent Telemachus received from Neſtor, or the proviſions for the journey, or even the journey itſelf at large; he diſpatches the whole in a few lines very judiciouſly; he carries his hero directly to Menelaus, who is to furniſh many incidents that contribute to the deſign of the poem, and paſſes over other matters as unneceſſary.

We have likewiſe a piece of poetical geography, and learn that it is exactly two days journey from Pyle to Lacedæmon.

This book takes up three days; the firſt is ſpent in the inquiries Telemachus makes of Neſtor concerning Ulyſſes; the two laſt in the morning-ſacrifice at Pylos, and in the journey of Telemachus to Lacedæmon; ſo that five days have now paſſed ſince the opening of the poem. I have ſaid nothing about the ſacrifice, though it be the moſt exact deſcription of the ſacrifices, as practiſed by the ancients, perhaps extant in any author; I refer to the obſervations upon the firſt book of the Iliad.

I would

With haſty hand the ruling reins he drew:
He laſh'd the courſers, and the courſers flew.
Beneath the bounding yoke alike they held
Their equal pace, and ſmok'd along the field.
The tow'rs of Pylos ſink, its views decay,
Fields after fields fly back, 'till cloſe of day:
Then ſunk the ſun, and darken'd all the way.
To Pheræ now, Diocleus' ſtately ſeat,
(Of Alpheus' race) the weary youths retreat.
His houſe affords the hoſpitable rite,
And pleas'd they ſleep (the bleſſing of the night.)
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
With roſy luſtre purpled o'er the lawn;
Again they mount, their journey to renew,
And from the ſounding portico they flew.
Along the waving fields their way they hold,
The fields receding as the chariot roll'd:
Then ſlowly ſunk the ruddy globe of light,
And o'er the ſhaded landſcape ruſh'd the night.

I would here remark, that the three firſt books are written with the utmoſt ſimplicity: there has been no room for ſuch exalted ſtrokes of poetry as are to be found in the Iliad, or in the future parts of the Odyſſey: but this is not owing to the decay of genius in Homer, as ſome critics have affirmed, (who look upon the Odyſſey as bearing marks of his declining years), but to the nature of the ſubject. The characters of Achilles and Ulyſſes are both very great, but very different. The Iliad conſiſts of battles and a continual commotion; the Odyſſey in patience and wiſdom: and conſequently the ſtyle of the two poems muſt be as different as the characters of the two heroes. A noble fountain of poetry opens in the next book, and flows with an uninterrupted courſe almoſt thro' the whole Odyſſey.

THE

THE ODYSSEY.

*BOOK IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

The conference with Menelaus.

Telemachus with Piſiſtratus arriving at Sparta, is hoſpitably received by Menelaus, to whom he relates the cauſe of his coming, and learns from him many particulars of what befel the Greeks ſince the deſtruction of Troy. He dwells more at large upon the prophecies of Proteus to him in his return, from which he acquaints Telemachus, that Ulyſſes is detained in the iſland of Calypſo.

In the mean time the ſuitors conſult to deſtroy Telemachus in his voyage home. Penelope is appriſed of this, but comforted in a dream by Pallas, in the ſhape of her ſiſter Ipthima.

AND now proud Sparta with their wheels reſounds,
Sparta whoſe walls a range of hills ſurrounds:
At the fair dome the rapid labour ends;
Where ſat Atrides 'midſt his bridal friends,
With double vows invoking Hymen's pow'r,
To bleſs his ſons and daughters nuptial hour,

* Ariſtotle in his Poetics reports, that certain ancient critics reproached Homer for an indecency in making Telemachus take his abode with Menelaus, and not with his own grandfather Icarius: this Monſieur Dacier ſufficiently anſwers, by ſhewing that Icarius had ſettled himſelf in Acarnania, and not in Lacedæmon.

That day, to great Achilles' ſon reſign'd,
Hermione, the faireſt of her kind,
Was ſent to crown the long protracted joy,
Eſpous'd before the final doom of Troy:
With ſteeds and gilded cars, a gorgeous train
Attend the nymph to Phthia's diſtant reign.
Meanwhile at home, to Megapenthes' bed
The virgin-choir Alector's daughter led.
Brave Megapenthes, from a ſtol'n amour
To great Atrides' age his hand-maid bore:
To Helen's bed the gods alone aſſign
Hermione, t' extend the regal line;
On whom a radiant pomp of graces wait,
Reſembling Venus in attractive ſtate.
While this gay friendly troop the king ſurround,
With feſtival and mirth the roofs reſound:
A bard amid the joyous circle ſings
High airs, attemper'd to the vocal ſtrings;
Whilſt warbling to the varied ſtrain, advance
Two ſprightly youths to form the bounding dance.
'Twas then, that iſſuing thro' the palace gate
The ſplendid car roll'd ſlow in regal ſtate:
On the bright eminence young Neſtor ſhone,
And faſt beſide him great Ulyſſes' ſon:
Grave Eteoneus ſaw the pomp appear,
And ſpeeding, thus addreſs'd the royal ear.
Two youths approach, whoſe ſemblant features prove
Their blood devolving from the ſource of Jove.
Is due reception deign'd, or muſt they bend
Their doubtful courſe to ſeek a diſtant friend?
Inſenſate! (with a ſigh the king replies)
Too long, miſ-judging, have I thought thee wiſe:
But

Ver. 37. *Menelaus blames Eteoneus.*] This is the firſt appearance of Menelaus; and ſurely nothing can more reconcile him to the favour of the ſpectators, than thoſe amiable colours in which the

But ſure relentleſs folly ſteels thy breaſt,
Obdurate to reject the ſtranger gueſt;
To theſe dear hoſpitable rites a foe,
Which in my wand'rings oft' reliev'd my woe:
Fed by the bounty of another's board,
'Till pitying Jove my native realm reſtor'd—
Straight be the courſers from the car releaſt,
Conduct the youths to grace the genial feaſt.
The ſeneſchal rebuk'd in haſte withdrew;
With equal haſte a menial train purſue:
Part led the courſers, from the car enlarge'd,
Each to a crib with choiceſt grain ſurcharge'd,
Part in a portico, profuſely grace'd
With rich magnificence, the chariot place'd:
Then to the doom the friendly pair invite,
Who eye the dazzling roofs with vaſt delight;
Reſplendent as the blaze of ſummer-noon,
Or the pale radiance of the midnight moon.
From room to room their eager view they bend;
Thence to the bath, a beauteous pile, deſcend;
Where a bright damſel-train attend the gueſts
With liquid odours, and embroider'd veſts.
Refreſh'd, they wait them to the bow'r of ſtate,
Where circled with his peers Atrides ſat:
Thron'd next the king, a fair attendant brings
The pureſt product of the cryſtal ſprings;
High on a maſſy vaſe of ſilver mold,
The burniſh'd laver flames with ſolid gold:
In ſolid gold the purple vintage flows,
And on the board a ſecond banquet roſe.

poet paints him. There is an overflow of humanity and gratitude in his expreſſions, like that of Dido in Virgil,

"Non ignara mali miſeris ſuccurrere diſco."

They contain a fine piece of morality, and teach that thoſe men are more tender-hearted and humane, who have felt the reverſe of fortune, than thoſe who have only lived in a condition of proſperity.

When

When thus the king with hoſpitable port:—
Accept this welcome to the Spartan court;
The waſte of nature let the feaſt repair,
Then your high lineage and your names declare:
Say from what ſcepter'd anceſtry ye claim,
Recorded eminent in deathleſs fame?
For vulgar parents cannot ſtamp their race
With ſignatures of ſuch majeſtic grace.
Ceaſing, benevolent he ſtraight aſſigns
The royal portion of the choiceſt chines
To each accepted friend: with grateful haſte
They ſhare the honours of the rich repaſt.
Suffice'd, ſoft-whiſpering thus to Neſtor's ſon,
His head reclin'd, young Ithacus begun.
View'ſt thou unmov'd, O ever-honour'd moſt!
Theſe prodigies of art, and wond'rous coſt!
Above, beneath, around the palace ſhines
The ſumleſs treaſure of exhauſted mines:
The ſpoils of elephants the roofs inlay,
And ſtudded amber darts a golden ray:
Such, and not nobler, in the realms above
My wonder dictates is the dome of Jove.
The monarch took the word, and grave reply'd.
Preſumptuous are the vaunts, and vain the pride
Of

Ver. 81. *Soft whiſpering thus to Neſtor's ſon.*] This may be thought a circumſtance of no importance, and very trivial in Telemachus; but it ſhews his addreſs and decency: he whiſpers, to avoid the appearance of a flatterer, or to conceal his own inexperience, in ſhewing too much ſurpriſe at the magnificence of the palace of Menelaus. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 91. *The monarch took the word,* &c.] The ancients, ſays Euſtathius, obſerve the prudence of Menelaus, in his reply to Telemachus; and the prudence of Telemachus in his behaviour to Menelaus: Menelaus denies not his riches and magnificence; but to take off the envy which they might attract, he throws the cala-

Of man, who dares in pomp with Jove conteſt,
Unchange'd, immortal, and ſupremely bleſt!
With all my affluence when my woes are weigh'd,
Envy will own, the purchaſe dearly paid.
For eight ſlow-circling years by tempeſt toſt,
From Cyprus to the far Phœnician coaſt,
(Sidon the capital) I ſtretch'd my toil
Thro' regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile.
Next, Æthiopia's utmoſt bound explore,
And the parch'd borders of th' Arabian ſhore:
Then warp my voyage on the ſouthern gales,
O'er the warm Libyan waves to ſpread my ſails:
That happy clime! where each revolving year
The teeming ewes a triple offſpring bear;

And

mities he has undergone into the contrary ſcale, and balances his felicity with his misfortunes: and Telemachus, coming into the palace at the time of an entertainment, chuſes to ſatisfy his curioſity rather than his appetite. Plutarch, I confeſs, condemns Telemachus of inexperience; who, when he ſaw the palace of Neſtor furniſhed only with things uſeful to life, as beds, tables, &c. is ſeized with no admiration; but the ſuperfluities of Menelaus, his ivory, amber, and gold, &c. carry him into tranſports: whereas a Socrates or a Diogenes would have exclaimed, What heaps of vanities have I beheld! It is true, ſuch a judgement might become philoſophers; but who, as Dacier obſerves, can think the character of a Socrates or a Diogenes ſuitable to young Telemachus? What is decent in a prince, and a young man, would ill become the gravity and wiſdom of a philoſopher.

Ver. 105. ——*Where each revolving year*
The teeming ewes, &c.]

Theſe ſheep, as deſcribed by Homer, may be thought the creation of the poet, and not the production of nature: but Herodotus, ſays Euſtathius, writes, that in Scythia the oxen have no horns thro' the extremity of the cold: he quotes this very verſe, rightly intimating, adds Herodotus, that in hot regions the horns of cattle ſhoot very ſpeedily. Ariſtotle directly aſſerts, that in Libya the young ones of horned cattle have horns immediately after they are brought into the world. So that Ariſtotle and Herodotus vindicate

And two fair creſcents of tranſlucent-horn.
The brows of all their young increaſe adorn:
The ſhepherd ſwains with ſure abundance bleſt,
On the fat flock and rural dainties feaſt;
Nor want of herbage makes the dairy fail,
But every ſeaſon fills the foaming pail.
Whilſt heaping unwiſh'd wealth, I diſtant roam;
The beſt of brothers, at his natal home,
By the dire fury of a traitreſs wife,
Ends the ſad evening of a ſtormy life:

dicate Homer. The poet adds, that the ſheep breed three times in the year; theſe words may have a different interpretation, and imply that they breed in three ſeaſons of the year, and not only in the ſpring, as in other countries; or that the ſheep have at once three lambs; but the firſt is the better interpretation. Athenæus upon this paſſage writes, that there are things in other countries no leſs ſtrange than what Homer relates of theſe ſheep of Libya. Thus in Luſitania, a country of Spain, now Portugal, there is a wonderful fruitfulneſs in all cattle, by reaſon of the excellent temper of the air; the fruits there never rot, and the roſes, violets, and aſparagus, never fail above three months in the year. *Euſtath.*

Ver. 114. *The beſt of brothers——*
——A traitreſs wife.]

Menelaus neither mentions Agamemnon, Clytemneſtra, nor Ægyſthus by name; a juſt indignation and reſentment is the occaſion of his ſuppreſſing the names of Clytemneſtra and Ægyſthus. Through the whole Iliad Menelaus is deſcribed as a very affectionate brother, and the love he bears Agamemnon is the reaſon why he paſſes by his name in ſilence. We ſee that he diſpatches the whole in one verſe and a half; Neſtor had told the ſtory pretty largely in the preceding book, and as he was a perſon leſs nearly concerned, might ſpeak of it with more eaſe and better temper than Menelaus; the poet avoids a needleſs repetition, and a repetition too of a ſtory univerſally known to all the Greeks. The death of Agamemnon is diſtributed into four places in the Odyſſey; Neſtor, Menelaus, Proteus, and the ſhade of Agamemnon in the eleventh book, all relate it, and every one very properly. Proteus as a prophet more fully than Neſtor and Menelaus, and Agamemnon more fully than them all, as being beſt acquainted with it. *Euſtathius.*

Whence with inceſſant grief my ſoul annoy'd,
Theſe riches are poſſeſs'd but not enjoy'd!
My wars, the copious theme of ev'ry tongue,
To you, your fathers have recorded long:
How fav'ring heav'n repaid my glorious toils
With a ſack'd palace, and barbaric ſpoils.
Oh! had the gods ſo large a boon deny'd,
And life, the juſt equivalent, ſupply'd
To thoſe brave warriours, who with glory fir'd,
Far from their country in my cauſe expir'd!
Still in ſhort intervals of pleaſing woe,
Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,
I to the glorious dead, for ever dear!
Indulge the tribute of a grateful tear.
But oh! Ulyſſes—deeper than the reſt
That ſad idea wounds my anxious breaſt!

My

Ver. 119. *My wars, the copious theme,* &c.] In the original Menelaus ſays, "I have deſtroyed a houſe," &c. There is an ambiguity in the expreſſion, as Euſtathius obſerves: for it may either ſignify the houſe of Priam, or his own in Argos; if it be underſtood of his own, then the meaning is, "I have indeed great "wealth, but have purchaſed it with the loſs of my people; I "could be content with the third part of it, if I could reſtore thoſe "to life who have periſhed before Troy." If it be underſtood of the kingdom of Priam, the regret he ſhews will ſtill appear the greater. He is enumerating his domeſtic happineſs, and his foreign conqueſt of Troy; but he throws the deſtruction of ſo many brave men who fell before it, in the contrary ſcale; and it ſo far outweighs both his wealth and his glory, that they both are joyleſs to him. Either of theſe interpretations ſhew an excellent temper of humanity in Menelaus, who thinks the effuſion of blood too dear a price for glory. At the ſame time the poet gives an admirable picture of human nature, which is reſtleſs in the purſuit of what it miſcalls happineſs, and, when in poſſeſſion of it, neglects it. But the diſquiet of Menelaus ariſes not from inconſtancy of temper, but wiſdom; it ſhews that all happineſs is unſatisfactory.

Ver. 131. *But oh! Ulyſſes,* &c.] It is with admirable addreſs, that the poet falls into his ſubject; it is art, but it ſeems to be nature:

My heart bleeds freſh with agonizing pain;
The bowl, and taſteful viands tempt in vain,
Nor ſleep's ſoft pow'r can cloſe my ſtreaming eyes,
When image'd to my ſoul his ſorrows riſe.
No peril in my cauſe he ceas'd to prove,
His labours equall'd only by my love:
And both alike to bitter fortune born,
For him, to ſuffer, and for me to mourn!
Whether he wanders on ſome friendly coaſt,
Or glides in Stygian gloom a penſive ghoſt,
No fame reveals; but doubtful of his doom,
His good old ſire with ſorrow to the tomb
Declines his trembling ſteps; untimely care
Withers the blooming vigour of his heir;
And the chaſte partner of his bed and throne,
Waſtes all her widow'd hours in tender moan.
  While thus pathetic to the prince he ſpoke:
From the brave youth the ſtreaming paſſion broke:
Studious to veil the grief, in vain repreſt,
His face he ſhrouded with his purple veſt:
The conſcious monarch pierce'd the coy diſguiſe,
And view'd his felial love with vaſt ſurpriſe:
Dubious to preſs the tender theme, or wait
To hear the youth enquire his father's fate.

nature: this conduct has a double effect; it takes away all ſuſpicion of flattery, for Menelaus is ignorant that the perſon with whom he diſcourſes is Telemachus; this gives him a manifeſt evidence of the love he bears to Ulyſſes; the young man could not but be pleaſed with the praiſe of his father, and with the ſincerity of it. It is alſo obſervable, that Menelaus builds his friendſhip for Ulyſſes upon a noble foundation; I mean the ſufferings which Ulyſſes underwent for his friend: Menelaus aſcribes not their affection to any familiarity or intercourſe of entertainments, but to a more ſincere cauſe, to the hazards which brave men undertake for a friend. In ſhort, the friendſhip of Menelaus and Ulyſſes is the friendſhip of heroes. *Euſtathius*.

In this ſuſpenſe bright Helen grace'd the room;
Before her breath'd a gale of rich perfume,
So moves, adorn'd with each attractive grace,
The ſilver-ſhafted goddeſs of the chace!
The ſeat of majeſty Adraſte brings,
With art illuſtrious, for the pomp of kings.
To ſpread the pall (beneath the regal chair)
Of ſofteſt woof, is bright Alcippe's care.

Ver. 157. ——*Bright Helen grace'd the room.*] Menelaus conjectured that the perſon he had entertained was the ſon of Ulyſſes, from the tears he ſhed at the name of his father, and from the reſemblance there was between Ulyſſes and Telemachus; it might therefore have been expected that Menelaus ſhould immediately have acknowled Telemachus, and not delayed a full diſcovery one moment, out of regard to his abſent friend; but Menelaus defers it upon a two-fold account, to give ſome time to Telemachus to indulge his ſorrow for his father, and recover himſelf from it, and alſo to avoid the repetition of a diſcovery upon the appearance of Helen, who would be curious to know the condition of the ſtrangers.

It may be neceſſary to ſay ſomething concerning Helen, that fatal beauty that engaged Greece and Aſia in arms; ſhe is drawn in the ſame colours in the Odyſſey as in the Iliad; it is a vicious character, but the colours are ſo admirably ſoftened by the art of the poet, that we pardon her infidelity. Menelaus is an uncommon inſtance of conjugal affection, he forgives a wife who had been falſe to him, and receives her into a full degree of favour. But perhaps the reader might have been ſhocked at it, and prejudiced againſt Helen as a perſon that ought to be forgot, or have her name only mentioned to diſgrace it: the poet therefore, to reconcile her to his reader, brings her in as a penitent, condemning her own infidelity in very ſtrong expreſſions; ſhe ſhews true modeſty, when ſhe calls herſelf impudent, and by this conduct we are inclined, like Menelaus, to forgive her.

Ver. 161, &c. *Adraſte, Alcippe, Helen's maids.*] It has been obſerved, that Helen has not the ſame attendants in the Odyſſey as ſhe had in the Iliad; they perhaps might be Trojans, and conſequently be left in their own country: or rather, it was an act of prudence in Menelaus, not to ſuffer thoſe ſervants about her who had been her attendants and confidents in her infidelity. *Euſtath.*

A ſilver caniſter divinely wrought,
In her ſoft hands the beauteous Phylo brought:
To Sparta's queen of old the radiant vaſe
Alcandra gave, a pledge of royal grace:
For Polybus her lord, (whoſe ſov'reign ſway
The wealthy tribes of Pharian Thebes obey)
When to that court Atrides came, careſt
With vaſt munificence th' imperial gueſt:
Two lavers from the richeſt ore refin'd,
With ſilver tripods, the kind hoſt aſſign'd;
And bounteous, from the royal teaſure told
Ten equal talents of refulgent gold.
Alcandra, conſort of his high command,
A golden diſtaff gave to Helen's hand;
And that rich vaſe, with living ſculpture wrought,
Which heap'd with wool the beauteous Phylo brought:
The ſilken fleece impurpl'd for the loom,
Rival'd the hyacinth in vernal bloom.
The ſovereign ſeat then Jove-born Helen preſs'd,
And pleaſing thus her ſcepter'd lord addreſs'd.
Who grace our palace now, that friendly pair,
Speak they their lineage, or their names declare?
Uncertain of the truth, yet uncontroll'd
Hear me the bodings of my breaſt unfold.
With wonder wrapt, on yonder cheek I trace
The feature of the Ulyſſean race:
Diffus'd o'er each reſembling line appear,
In juſt ſimilitude, the grace and air
Of

Ver. 192. ——*The grace and air*
Of young Telemachus!——]

It may ſeem ſtrange that Helen ſhould at firſt view recollect the features of Ulyſſes in Telemachus; and that Menelaus, who was better acquainted with him, and his conſtant friend, ſhould not make the ſame obſervation. But Athenæus, to reconcile this to probability, ſays, that women are curious and ſkilful obſervers of the likeneſs of children to parents, for one particular reaſon, that they

Of young Telemachus! the lovely boy,
Who bleſs'd Ulyſſes with a father's joy,
What-time the Greeks combin'd their ſocial arms,
T' avenge the ſtain of my ill-fated charms!
  Juſt is thy thought, the king aſſenting cries,
Methinks Ulyſſes ſtrikes my wond'ring eyes:
Full ſhines the father in the filial frame,
His port, his features, and his ſhape the ſame:
Such quick regards his ſparkling eyes beſtow;
Such wavy ringlets o'er his ſhoulders flow!
And when he heard the long diſaſtrous ſtore
Of cares, which in my cauſe Ulyſſes bore;
Diſmay'd, heart-wounded with paternal woes,
Above reſtraint the tide of ſorrow roſe:
Cautious to let the guſhing grief appear,
His purple garment veil'd the falling tear.
  See there confeſt, Piſiſtratus replies,
The genuine worth of Ithacus the wiſe!
Of that heroic fire the youth is ſprung,
But modeſt awe hath chain'd his tim'rous tongue,
Thy voice, O king! with pleas'd attention heard,
Is like the dictates of a god rever'd.
With him at Neſtor's high command I came,
Whoſe age I honour with a parent's name.
By adverſe deſtiny conſtrain'd to ſue
For counſel and redreſs, he ſues to you.
Whatever ill the friendleſs orphan bears,
Bereav'd of parents in his infant years,
Still muſt the wrong'd Telemachus ſuſtain,
If hopeful of your aid, he hopes in vain:
Affiance'd in your friendly pow'r alone,
The youth would vindicate the vacant throne.
  In Sparta bleſt, and theſe deſiring eyes
View my friend's ſon? (the king exulting cries)

they may, upon finding any diſſimilitude, have the pleaſure of hinting at the unchaſtity of others.

Son

Son of my friend, by glorious toils approv'd,
Whoſe ſword was ſacred to the man he lov'd:
Mirrour of conſtant faith, rever'd, and mourn'd!—
When Troy was ruin'd, had the chief return'd,
No Greek an equal ſpace had e'er poſſeſt,
Of dear affection, in my grateful breaſt.
I, to confirm the mutual joys we ſhar'd,
For his abode a capital prepar'd;
Argos the ſeat of ſovereign rule I choſe:
Fair in the plan the future palace roſe,
Where my Ulyſſes and his race might reign,
And portion to his tribes the wide domain.
To them my vaſſals had reſign'd a ſoil,
With teeming plenty to reward their toil.
There with commutual zeal we both had ſtrove
In acts of dear benevolence, and love:
Brothers in peace, not rivals in command,
And death alone diſſolv'd the friendly band!
Some envious pow'r the bliſsful ſcene deſtroys;
Vaniſh'd are all the viſionary joys:
The ſoul of friendſhip to my hope is loſt,
Fated to wander from his natal coaſt!
He ceas'd; a guſt of grief began to riſe:
Faſt ſtreams a tide from beauteous Helen's eyes;

Faſt

Ver. 234. *For his abode a capital prepar'd.*] The poet puts theſe words in the mouth of Menelaus, to expreſs the ſincerity of his friendſhip to Ulyſſes; he intended him all advantage, and no detriment: we muſt therefore conclude, that Ulyſſes was ſtill to retain his ſovereignty over Ithaca, and only remove to Argos, to live with ſo ſincere a friend as Menelaus. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 249. ——*A guſt of grief began to riſe*, &c.] It has been obſerved through the Iliad, and may be obſerved through the whole Odyſſey, that it was not a diſgrace to the greateſt heroes to ſhed tears; and indeed I cannot ſee why it ſhould be an honour to any man, to be able to diveſt himſelf of human nature ſo far as to appear inſenſible upon the moſt affecting occaſions. No man is born

a gneſt;

Faſt for the ſire the filial ſorrows flow;
The weeping monarch ſwells the mighty woe:
Thy cheeks, Piſiſtratus, the tears bedew,
While pictur'd to thy mind appear'd in view
Thy martial * brother: on the Phrygian plain
Extended pale, by ſwarthy Memnon ſlain!
But ſilence ſoon the ſon of Neſtor broke,
And melting with fraternal pity ſpoke.
Frequent, O king, was Neſtor wont to raiſe
And charm attention with thy copious praiſe:
To crown thy various gifts, the ſage aſſign'd
The glory of a firm capacious mind:
With that ſuperiour attribute controul
This unavailing impotence of ſoul.
Let not your roof with echoing grief reſound,
Now for the feaſt the friendly bowl is crown'd:
But

a ſtoic: it is art, not nature; tears are only a ſhame, when the cauſe from whence they flow is mean or vicious. Here Menelaus laments a friend, Telemachus a father, Piſiſtratus a brother: but from what cauſe ariſe the tears of Helen? It is to be remembered that Helen is drawn in the ſofteſt colours in the Odyſſey; the character of the adultereſs is loſt in that of the penitent: the name of Ulyſſes throws her into tears, becauſe ſhe is the occaſion of all the ſufferings of that brave man; the poet makes her the firſt in ſorrow, as ſhe is the cauſe of all their tears.

* Antilochus.

Ver. 265. *Let not your roof with echoing grief reſound,*
Now for the feaſt the friendly bowl is crown'd.]

It may be aſked why ſorrow for the dead ſhould be more unſeaſonable in the evening than the morning? Euſtathius anſwers, leſt others ſhould look upon our evening tears as the effect of wine, and not of love to the dead.

" Intempeſtivus venit inter pocula fletus,
" Nec lacrymas dulci fas eſt miſcere falerno."

I fancy there may be a more rational account given of this expreſſion; the time of feaſting was ever looked upon as a time of joy and thankſgiving to the gods; it bore a religious veneration among the

But when from dewy ſhade emerging bright,
Aurora ſtreaks the ſky with orient light,
Let each deplore his dead: the rites of woe
Are all, alas! the living can beſtow:
O'er the congenial duſt injoin'd to ſhear
The graceful curl, and drop the tender tear.
Then mingling in the mournful pomp with you,
I'll pay my brother's ghoſt a warriour's due,
And mourn the brave Antilochus, a name
Not unrecorded in the rolls of fame:
With ſtrength and ſpeed ſuperior form'd, in fight
To face the foe, or intercept his flight:
Too early ſnatch'd by fate ere known to me!
I boaſt a witneſs of his worth in thee.
  Young and mature! the monarch thus rejoins,
In thee renew'd the ſoul of Neſtor ſhines:
Form'd by the care of that conſummate ſage,
In early bloom an oracle of age.
Whene'er his influence Jove vouchſafes to ſhow'r
To bleſs the natal, and the nuptial hour;
From the great ſire tranſmiſſive to the race,
The boon devolving gives diſtinguiſh'd grace.
Such, happy Neſtor! was thy glorious doom;
Around thee full of years, thy offſpring bloom,
Expert of arms, and prudent in debate;
The gifts of heav'n to guard thy hoary ſtate.
But now let each becalm his troubled breaſt,
Waſh, and partake ſerene the friendly feaſt.
To move thy ſuit, Telemachus, delay,
'Till heav'n's revolving lamp reſtores the day.
  He ſaid, Aſphalion ſwift the laver brings;
Alternate all partake the grateful ſprings:
Then from the rites of purity repair,
And with keen guſt the ſav'ry viands ſhare.

ancients, and conſequently to ſhed tears when they ſhould expreſs their gratitude to the gods with joy, was eſteemed a profanation.

Meantime with genial joy to warm the ſoul,
Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inſpiring bowl:
Temper'd with drugs of ſov'reign uſe, t' aſſuage
The boiling boſom of tumultuous rage;
To clear the cloudy front of wrinkled care,
And dry the tearful ſluices of deſpair:

Ver. 302. *Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inſpiring bowl,* &c.] The conjectures about this cordial of Helen have been almoſt infinite. Some take nepenthes allegorically, to ſignify hiſtory, muſic, or philoſophy. Plutarch in the firſt of the Sympoſiacs affirms it to be, diſcourſe well ſuiting the preſent paſſions and conditions of the hearers. Macrobius is of the ſame opinion, "Delinimentum illud quod Helena vino miſcuit, non herba fuit, non ex Indiâ ſuccus, ſed narrandi opportunitas, quæ hoſpitem mœroris obtum flexit ad gaudium." What gave a foundation to this fiction of Homer, as Dacier obſerves, might be this. Diodorus writes that in Ægypt, and chiefly at Heliopolis, the ſame with Thebes, where Menelaus ſojourned, as has been already obſerved, there lived women who boaſted of certain potions, which not only made the unfortunate forget all their calamities, but drove away the moſt violent ſallies of grief or anger. Euſebius directly affirms, that even in his time the women of Dioſpolis were able to calm the rage of grief or anger by certain potions. Now whether this be truth or fiction, it fully vindicates Homer, ſince a poet may make uſe of a prevailing, though falſe opinion.

Milton mentions this nepenthes in his excellent maſque of Comus.

——— Behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his cryſtal bounds!
Not that nepenthes which the wife of Thone
In Ægypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of ſuch pow'r as this to ſtir up joy,
To life ſo friendly, or ſo cool to thirſt.

But that there may be ſomething more than fiction in this is very probable, ſince the Ægyptians were ſo notoriouſly ſkilled in phyſic; and particularly ſince this very Thon, or Thonis, or Thoon, is reported by the ancients to have been the inventor of phyſic among the Ægyptians. The deſcription of this nepenthes agrees admirably with what we know of the qualities and effects of opium.

Charm'd

Charm'd with that virtuous draught, th' exalted mind
All ſenſe of woe delivers to the wind.
Tho' on the blazing pile his parent lay,
Or a lov'd brother groan'd his life away,
Or darling ſon, oppreſs'd by ruffian-force,
Fell breathleſs at his feet, a mangled corſe;
From morn to eve, impaſſive and ſerene,
The man entrance'd would view the deathful ſcene.
Theſe drugs, ſo friendly to the joys of life,
Bright Helen learn'd from Thone's imperial wife;
Who ſway'd the ſcepter, where prolific Nile
With various ſimples clothes the fatt'ned ſoil.
With wholſome herbage mix'd, the direful bane
Of vegetable venom, taints the plain;
From Pæon ſprung, their patron-god imparts
To all the Pharian race his healing arts.
The bev'rage now prepar'd t' inſpire the feaſt,
The circle thus the beauteous queen addreſt.
Thron'd in omnipotence, ſupremeſt Jove
Tempers the fates of human race above;
By the firm ſanction of his ſov'reign will,
Alternate are decreed our good and ill.
To feaſtful mirth be this white hour aſſign'd,
And ſweet diſcourſe, the banquet of the mind.
Myſelf aſſiſting in the ſocial joy,
Will tell Ulyſſes' bold exploit in Troy:
Sole witneſs of the deed I now declare;
Speak you (who ſaw) his wonders in the war.

Ver. 331. *Myſelf* ——————
Will tell Ulyſſes' bold exploit ——————

What is here related ſhews the neceſſity of the introduction of Helen, and the uſe the poet makes of it: ſhe is not brought in merely as a *muta perſona*, to fill up the number of perſons; but ſhe relates ſeveral incidents, in which ſhe herſelf was concerned, and which ſhe could only know; and conſequently not ony diverſifies, but carries on the deſign of the ſtory. *Euſtathius.*

Seam'd o'er with wounds, which his own ſabre gave,
In the vile habit of a village-ſlave,
The foe deceiv'd, he paſs'd the tented plain,
In Troy to mingle with the hoſtile train.
In this attire ſecure from ſearching eyes,
Till haply piercing thro' the dark diſguiſe
The chief I challenge'd; he, whoſe practis'd wit
Knew all the ſerpent-mazes of deceit,
Eludes my ſearch: but when his form I view'd
Freſh from the bath with fragrant oils renew'd,

Ver. 335. *Seam'd o'er with wounds*, &c.] The poet here ſhews his judgement in paſſing over many inſtances of the ſufferings of Ulyſſes, and relating this piece of conduct, not mentioned by any other author. The art of Ulyſſes in extricating himſelf from difficulties is laid down as the ground-work of the poem. This farther ſhews the neceſſity of the appearance of Helen, no other perſon being acquainted with the ſtory. If this ſtratagem be not a reality, yet it bears the reſemblance of it; and Megabyſus the Perſian (as Euſtathius obſerves), practiſed it, as we learn from hiſtory. We may reaſonably conjecture, that Ulyſſes was committed to Helen, in hopes that he would diſcover the affairs of the army more freely to her than any other perſon; for what could be more agreeable to a Greek, than to be committed to the care of a Greek, as Ulyſſes was to Helen? By the ſame conduct the poet raiſes the character of Helen, by making her ſhew her repentance by an act of generoſity to her countryman. The original ſays ſhe gave an oath to Ulyſſes not to diſcover him before he was in ſafety in the Grecian army: now this does not imply, that ſhe ever diſcovered to the Trojans that Ulyſſes had entered Troy: the contrary opinion is moſt probable, for it cannot be imagined but all Troy muſt have been incenſed greatly againſt her, had they known that ſhe had concealed one of their mortal enemies, and diſmiſſed him in ſafety; it was ſufficient for Ulyſſes to take her oath that ſhe would not diſcover him, till he was in ſecurity: he left her future conduct to her own diſcretion. It is probable that ſhe furniſhed Ulyſſes with a ſword, for in his return he ſlew many Trojans: he came to Troy, obſerves Euſtathius, in rags, and like a ſlave; and to have concealed a ſword, would have endangered his life upon a diſcovery of it, and given ſtrong ſuſpicions of an impoſtor.

His

His limbs in military purple dreſs'd;
Each brightning grace the genuine Greek confeſs'd.
A previous pledge of ſacred faith obtain'd,
'Till he the lines and Argive fleet regain'd,
To keep his ſtay conceal'd; the chief declar'd
The plans of war againſt the town prepar'd.
Exploring then the ſecrets of the ſtate,
He learn'd what beſt might urge the Dardan fate:
And ſafe returning to the Grecian hoſt,
Sent many a ſhade to Pluto's dreary coaſt.
Loud grief reſounded thro' the tow'rs of Troy,
But my pleas'd boſom glow'd with ſecret joy:
For then with dire remorſe, and conſcious ſhame,
I view'd th' effects of that diſaſtrous flame,
Which kindled by th' imperious queen of love,
Conſtrain'd me from my native realm to rove:
And oft in bitterneſs of ſoul deplor'd
My abſent daughter, and my dearer lord;

Ver. 351. *Exploring then the ſecrets of the ſtate.*] The word φρένας is here uſed in a large ſenſe: it takes in all the obſervation Ulyſſes made during his continuance in Troy, it takes in the deſigns and counſels of the enemy, his meaſuring the gates, the height of the walls, the eaſieſt place for an aſſault or ambuſh, the taking away the Palladium, or whatever elſe a wiſe man may be ſuppoſed to obſerve, or act, in execution of ſuch a ſtratagem. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 357. *For then with dire remorſe,* &c.] The concluſion of this ſpeech is very artful: Helen aſcribes her ſeduction to Venus, and mentions nothing of Paris. Inſtead of naming Troy, ſhe conceals it, and only ſays ſhe was carried thither, leaving Troy to the imagination of Menelaus; ſhe ſuffers not herſelf to mention names ſo odious now to herſelf, and ever to Menelaus, as Paris and Troy. She compliments Menelaus very handſomely, and ſays, that he wanted no accompliſhment either in mind or body: it being the nature of man not to reſent the injuries of a wife ſo much upon the account of her being corrupted, but of the preference ſhe gives to another perſon; he looks upon ſuch a preference as the moſt affecting part of the injury. *Euſtathius.*

Admir'd among the firſt of human race,
For ev'ry gift of mind, and manly grace.
Right well, reply'd the king, your ſpeech diſplays
The matchleſs merit of the chief you praiſe:
Heroes in various climes myſelf have found,
For martial deeds, and depth of thought renown'd:
But Ithacus, unrival'd in his claim,
May boaſt a title to the loudeſt fame:
In battle calm, he guides the rapid ſtorm,
Wiſe to reſolve and patient to perform.
What wond'rous conduct in the chief appear'd,
When the vaſt fabric of the ſteed we rear'd!
Some dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom,
Urge'd you with great Deiphobus to come,
T' explore the fraud; with guile oppos'd to guile,
Slow-pacing thrice around th' inſidious pile;
Each noted leader's name you thrice invoke,
Your accent varying as their ſpouſes ſpoke:
The pleaſing ſounds each latent wariour warm'd,
But moſt Tydides' and my heart alarm'd:
To quit the ſteed we both impatient preſs,
Threat'ning to anſwer from the dark receſs.

Ver. 365. *Menelaus's anſwer.*] The judgement of the poet in continuing the ſtory concerning Ulyſſes, is not obſerved by any commentator. Ulyſſes is the chief hero of the poem, every thing ſhould have a reference to him, otherwiſe the narration ſtands ſtill without any advance towards the concluſion of it. The poet therefore, to keep Ulyſſes in our minds, dwells upon his ſufferings and adventures: he ſupplies his not appearing in the preſent ſcene of action, by ſetting his character before us, and continually forcing his prudence, patience, and valour upon our obſervation. He uſes the ſame art and judgement with relation to Achilles in the Iliad: the hero of the poem is abſent from the chief ſcenes of action during much of the time which that poem compriſes, but he is continually brought into the mind of the reader, by recounting his exploits and glory.

Unmov'd

Unmov'd the mind of Ithacus remain'd:
And the vain ardours of our love reſtrain'd:
But Anticlus unable to controul,
Spoke loud the language of his yearning ſoul:
Ulyſſes ſtraight with indignation fir'd,
(For ſo the common care of Greece requir'd)
Firm to his lips his forceful hands apply'd,
'Till on his tongue the flutt'ring murmurs dy'd.
Meantime Minerva from the fraudful horſe,
Back to the court of Priam bent your courſe.
Inclement fate: Telemachus replies,
Frail is the boaſted attribute of wiſe:
The leader mingling with the vulgar hoſt,
Is in the common maſs of matter loſt!
But now let ſleep the painful waſte repair
Of ſad reflection, and corroding care.
He ceas'd; the menial fair that round her wait,
At Helen's beck prepare the room of ſtate;
Beneath an ample portico, they ſpread
The downy fleece to form the ſlumbr'ous bed;
And o'er ſoft palls of purple grain, unfold
Rich tapeſtry, ſtiff with inwoven gold:
Then thro' th' illumin'd dome, to balmy reſt
Th' obſequious herald guides each princely gueſt:
While to his regal bow'r the king aſcends,
And beauteous Helen on her lord attends,
Soon as the morn, in orient purple dreſt,
Unbarr'd the portal of the roſeate eaſt,
The monarch roſe; magnificent to view,
Th' imperial mantle o'er his veſt he threw:
The glitt'ring zone athwart his ſhoulder caſt,
A ſtarry falchion low depending grace'd;
Claſp'd on his feet th' embroider'd ſandals ſhine;
And forth he moves, majeſtic and divine:
Inſtant to young Telemachus he preſs'd,
And thus benevolent his ſpeech addreſs'd.

Say,

Say, royal youth, ſincere of ſoul, report
What cauſe hath led you to the Spartan court?
Do public or domeſtic cares conſtrain
This toilſome voyage o'er the ſurgy main?
O highly favour'd delegate of Jove!
(Replies the prince) inflam'd with filial love,
And anxious hope, to hear my parent's doom,
A ſuppliant to your royal court I come.
Our ſov'reign ſeat a lewd uſurping race
With lawleſs riot, and miſ-rule diſgrace;
To pamper'd inſolence devoted fall
Prime of the flock, and choiceſt of the ſtall:
For wild ambition wings their bold deſire,
And all to mount th' imperial bed aſpire.
But proſtrate I implore, oh king! relate
The mournful ſeries of my father's fate:
Each known diſaſter of the man diſcloſe,
Born by his mother to a world of woes!
Recite them! nor in erring pity fear
To wound with ſtoried grief the filial ear:
If e'er Ulyſſes, to reclaim your right,
Avow'd his zeal in council or in fight,
If Phrygian camps the friendly toils atteſt,
To the ſire's merit give the ſon's requeſt.
Deep from his inmoſt ſoul Atrides ſigh'd,
And thus indignant to the prince reply'd:
Heav'ns! would a ſoft, inglorious, daſtard train
An abſent hero's nuptial joys profane!

So

Ver. 447. *Heav'ns! would a ſoft, inglorious, daſtard train*] Menelaus is fired with indignation at the injuries offered his friend by the ſuitors: he breaks out into an exclamation, and in a juſt contempt vouchſafes not to mention them: he thinks he fully diſtinguiſhes whom he intends, by calling them "thoſe cowards." The compariſon which he introduces is very juſt, they are the fawns, Ulyſſes is the lion.

This is the firſt ſimile that Homer has inſerted in the Odyſſey; but

So with her young, amid the woodland ſhades,
A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades,
Leaves in the fatal lair the tender fawns,
Climbs the green cliff, or feeds the flow'ry lawns:
Meantime return'd, with dire remorſeleſs ſway
The monarch-ſavage rends the trembling prey.
With equal fury, and with equal fame,
Ulyſſes ſoon ſhall re-aſſert his claim.
O Jove, ſupreme, whom gods and men revere!
And * thou, to whom 'tis given to gild the ſphere!
With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid
The chief adopted by the martial maid!
Such to our wiſh the warriour ſoon reſtore,
As when contending on the Leſbian ſhore
His proweſs Philomelides confeſs'd,
And loud acclaiming Greeks the victor bleſs'd:
Then ſoon th' invaders of his bed and throne,
Their love preſumptuous ſhall with life atone.
With patient ear, oh royal youth, attend
The ſtoried labours of thy father's friend:
Fruitful of deeds, the copious tale is long,
But truth ſevere ſhall dictate to my tongue:
Learn what I heard the ſea-born ſeer relate,
Whoſe eye can pierce the dark receſs of fate.

but I cannot think it proceeded from a barrenneſs of invention, or through phlegm in the declenſion of his years, as ſome have imagined. The nature of the poem requires a difference of ſtyle from the Iliad! The Iliad ruſhes along like a torrent; the Odyſſey flows gently on like a deep ſtream, with a ſmooth tranquillity; Achilles is all fire, Ulyſſes all wiſdom.

* Apollo.

Ver. 462. *As when contending on the Leſbian ſhore.*] The poet here gives an account of one of Ulyſſes's adventures. Philomelides was king of Leſbos, and Euſtathius obſerves, that there was a tradition that Ulyſſes and Diomedes ſlew him, and turned a ſtately monument he had raiſed for himſelf into a public place for the reception of ſtrangers.

Long

Long on th' Ægyptian coaſt by calms confin'd,
Heav'n to my fleet refus'd a proſp'rous wind;
No vows had we preferr'd, nor victim ſlain!
For this the gods each fav'ring gale reſtrain:
Jealous, to ſee their high beheſts obey'd;
Severe, if men th' eternal rights evade.
High o'er a gulfy ſea, the Pharian iſle
Fronts the deep roar of diſemboguing Nile:
Her diſtance from the ſhore, the courſe begun
At dawn, and ending with the ſetting ſun,
A galley meaſures; when the ſtiffer gales
Riſe on the poop, and fully ſtretch the ſails.
There, anchor'd veſſels ſafe in harbour lye,
Whilſt limpid ſprings the failing caſk ſupply.
And now the twentieth ſun deſcending, laves
His glowing axle in the weſtern waves;
Still with expanded ſails we court in vain
Propitious winds, to waft us o'er the main:
And the pale mariner at once deplores
His drooping vigour, and exhauſted ſtores.
When lo! a bright cœrulean form appears,
The fair Eidothea! to diſpel my fears:
Proteus her ſire divine. With pity preſs'd,
Me ſole the daughter of the deep addreſs'd;
What-time with hunger-pin'd, my abſent mates
Roam the wild iſle in ſearch of rural cates,
Bait the barb'd ſteel, and from the fiſhy flood
Appeaſe th' afflictive fierce deſire of food.

Whoe'er

Ver. 499. *Bait the barb'd ſteel, and from the fiſhy flood.*] Menelaus ſays, hunger was ſo violent among his companions, that they were compelled to eat fiſh. Plutarch in his Sympoſiacs obſerves, that, among the Syrians and Greeks, to abſtain from fiſh was eſteemed a piece of ſanctity; that though the Greeks were encamped upon the Helleſpont, there is not the leaſt intimation that they eat fiſh, or any ſea proviſion; and that the companions of Ulyſſes, in the twelfth

Whoe'er thou art (the azure goddeſs cries)
Thy conduct ill deſerves the praiſe of wiſe:
Is death thy choice, or miſery thy boaſt,
That here inglorious on a barren coaſt
Thy brave aſſociates droop, a meagre train
With famine pale, and aſk thy care in vain?
Struck with the kind reproach, I ſtraight reply;
Whate'er thy title in thy native ſky,
A goddeſs ſure! for more than mortal grace
Speaks thee deſcendant of ætherial race:
Deem not, that here of choice my fleet remains;
Some heav'nly pow'r averſe my ſtay conſtrains:
O, piteous of my fate, vouchſafe to ſhew,
(For what's ſequeſter'd from celeſtial view?)
What pow'r becalms th' innavigable ſeas?
What guilt provokes him, and what vows appeaſe?
I ceas'd, when affable the goddeſs cry'd;
Obſerve, and in the truths I ſpeak confide:
Th' oracl'ous ſeer frequents the Pharian coaſt,
From whoſe high bed my birth divine I boaſt:
Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main,
The delegate of Neptune's wat'ry reign.
Watch with inſidious care his known abode;
There faſt in chains conſtrain the various god:
Who bound, obedient to ſuperiour force,
Unerring will preſcribe your deſtin'd courſe.

twelfth book of the Odyſſey, never ſought for fiſh till all their other proviſions were conſumed. No fiſh is ever offered in ſacrifice: the Pythagoreans in particular command fiſh not to be eaten more ſtrictly than any other animal: fiſh afford no excuſe at all for their deſtruction, they live as it were in another world, diſturb not our air, conſume not our fruits, or injure the waters: and therefore the Pythagoreans, who were unwilling to offer violence to any animals, fed very little, or not at all on fiſhes. I thought it neceſſary to inſert this from Plutarch, becauſe it is an obſervation that explains other paſſages in the ſequel of the Odyſſey.

If ſtudious of your realms, you then demand
Their ſtate, ſince laſt you left your natal land;
Inſtant the god obſequious will diſcloſe
Bright tracks of glory, or a cloud of woes.
She ceas'd, and ſuppliant thus I made reply;
O goddeſs! on thy aid my hopes rely:
Dictate propitious to my duteous ear,
What arts can captivate the changeful ſeer?
For perilous th' aſſay, unheard the toil,
T' elude the preſcience of a god by guile.
Thus to the goddeſs mild my ſuit I end.
Then ſhe. Obedient to my rule, attend:
When thro' the zone of heav'n the mounted ſun
Hath journey'd half, and half remains to run;
The ſeer, while zephyrs curl the ſwelling deep,
Baſks on the breezy ſhore, in grateful ſleep,
His oozy limbs. Emerging from the wave,
The Phocæ ſwift ſurround his rocky cave,
Frequent and full; the conſecrated train
Of * her, whoſe azure trident awes the main:
There wallowing warm, th' enormous herd exhales
An oily ſteam, and taints the noon-tide gales.
To that receſs, commodious for ſurpriſe,
When purple light ſhall next ſuffuſe the ſkies,
With me repair; and from thy warriour band
Three choſen chiefs of dauntleſs ſoul command:
Let their auxiliar force befriend the toil,
For ſtrong the god, and perfected in guile.
Stretch'd on the ſhelly ſhore, he firſt ſurveys
The flouncing herd aſcending from the ſeas;
Their number ſumm'd, repos'd in ſleep profound
The ſcaly charge their guardian god ſurround:
So with his batt'ning flocks the careful ſwain
Abides, pavilion'd on the graſſy plain.

* Amphitrite.

With pow'rs united, obſtinately bold
Invade him, couch'd amid the ſcaly fold:
Inſtant he wears, eluſive of the rape,
The mimic force of ev'ry ſavage ſhape:
Or glides with liquid lapſe a murm'ring ſtream,
Or wrapt in flame, he glows at ev'ry limb.
Yet ſtill retentive, with redoubled might
Thro' each vain paſſive form conſtrain his flight.
But when, his native ſhape reſum'd, he ſtands
Patient of conqueſt, and your cauſe demands;
The cauſe that urge'd the bold attempt declare,
And ſoothe the vanquiſh'd with a victor's pray'r.
The bands relax'd, implore the ſeer to ſay
What godhead interdicts the wat'ry way?
Who ſtraight propitious, in prophetic ſtrain
Will teach you to repaſs th' unmeaſur'd main.
She ceas'd, and bounding from the ſhelfy ſhore,
Round the deſcending nymph the waves redounding roar.
High wrapt in wonder of the future deed,
With joy impetuous, to the port I ſpeed:
The wants of nature with repaſt ſuffice,
'Till night with grateful ſhade involv'd the ſkies,
And ſhed ambroſial dews. Faſt by the deep,
Along the tented ſhore, in balmy ſleep,
Our cares were loſt. When o'er the eaſtern lawn,
In ſaffron robes the daughter of the dawn
Advance'd her roſy ſteps; before the bay,
Due ritual honours to the gods I pay;
Then ſeek the place the ſea-born nymph aſſign'd,
With three aſſociates of undaunted mind.
Arriv'd, to form along th' appointed ſtrand
For each a bed, ſhe ſcoops the hilly ſand;
Then from her azure car, the finny ſpoils
Of four vaſt Phocæ takes, to veil her wiles:

Beneath the finny ſpoils extended prone,
Hard toil! the prophet's piercing eye to ſhun:
New from the corſe, the ſcaly frauds diffuſe
Unſavoury ſtench of oil, and brackiſh ooze:
But the bright ſea-maid's gentle pow'er implor'd,
With nectar'd drops the ſick'ning ſenſe reſtor'd.
Thus 'till the ſun had travell'd half the ſkies,
Ambuſh'd we lie, and wait the bold empriſe:
When thronging quick to baſk in open air,
The flocks of ocean to the ſtrand repair:
Couch'd on the ſunny ſand, the monſters ſleep:
Then Proteus mounting from the hoary deep,
Surveys his charge, unknowing of deceit:
(In order told, we make the ſum compleat.)
Pleas'd with the falſe review, ſecure he lies,
And leaden ſlumbers preſs his drooping eyes.
Ruſhing impetuous forth, we ſtraight prepare
A furious onſet with the ſound of war,
And ſhouting ſeize the god: our force t' evade
His various arts he ſoon reſumes in aid:
A lion now, he curls a ſurgy mane;
Sudden, our bands a ſpotted pard reſtrain;

Ver. 613. *And ſhouting ſeize the god:*——] Proteus has, through the whole ſtory, been deſcribed as a god who knew all things; it may then be aſked, how comes it that he did not foreknow the violence that was deſigned againſt his own perſon? and is it not a contradiction, that he who knew Menelaus without information, ſhould not know that he lay in ambuſh to ſeize him? The only anſwer that occurs to me is, that theſe enchanters never pretend to have an inherent fore-knowledge of events, but learn things by magical arts, and by recourſe to the ſecrets of their profeſſion; ſo that Proteus having no ſuſpicion, had not conſulted his art, and conſequently might be ſurpriſed by Menelaus: ſo far is agreeable to the pretenſions of ſuch deluders: the poet indeed has drawn him in colours ſtronger than life; but poetry adds or detracts at pleaſure, and is allowed frequently to ſtep out of the way, to bring a foreign ornament into the ſtory.

Then

Then arm'd with tuſks, and light'ning in his eyes,
A boar's obſcener ſhape the god belies:
On ſpiry volumes, there, a dragon rides;
Here, from our ſtrict embrace a ſtream he glides:
And laſt, ſublime his ſtately growth he rears,
A tree, and well-diſſembled foliage wears.
Vain efforts! with ſuperiour pow'r compreſs'd,
Me with reluctance thus the ſeer addreſs'd.
Say, ſon of Atreus, ſay what god inſpir'd
This daring fraud, and what the boon deſir'd?
I thus, O thou, whoſe certain eye foreſees
The fix'd event of fate's remote decrees;
After long woes, and various toil endur'd,
Still on this deſert iſle my fleet is moor'd;
Unfriended of the gales. All-knowing! ſay,
What godhead interdicts the wat'ry way?
What vows repentant will the pow'r appeaſe,
To ſpeed a proſp'rous voyage o'er the ſeas?
To Jove (with ſtern regard the god replies)
And all th' offended ſynod of the ſkies,
Juſt hecatombs with due devotion ſlain,
Thy guilt abſolv'd, a proſp'rous voyage gain.
To the firm ſanction of thy fate attend!
An exile thou, nor cheering face of friend,
Nor ſight of natal ſhore, nor regal dome
Shalt yet enjoy, but ſtill art doom'd to roam.
Once more the Nile, who from the ſecret ſource
Of Jove's high ſeat deſcends with ſweepy force,
Muſt view his billows white beneath thy oar,
And altars blaze along his ſanguine ſhore.

Ver. 635. *To Jove——Juſt hecatombs——*&c.] Homer continually inculcates morality, and piety to the gods; he gives in this place a great inſtance of the neceſſity of it. Menelaus cannot ſucceed in any of his actions, till he pays due honours to the gods; the neglect of ſacrifice is the occaſion of all his calamity, and the performance of it opens a way to all his future proſperity.

Then will the gods, with holy pomp ador'd,
To thy long vows a ſafe return accord.
He ceas'd: heart-wounded with afflictive pain,
(Doom'd to repeat the perils of the main,
A ſhelfy tract, and long!) O ſeer, I cry,
To the ſtern ſanction of th' offended ſky
My prompt obedience bows. But deign to ſay,
What fate propitious, or what dire diſmay
Suſtain thoſe peers, the reliques of our hoſt,
Whom I with Neſtor on the Phrygian coaſt
Embracing left? Muſt I the warriours weep,
Whelm'd in the bottom of the monſtrous deep?
Or did the kind domeſtic friend deplore
The breathleſs heroes on their native ſhore?
Preſs not too far, reply'd the god; but ceaſe
To know, what known will violate thy peace:
Too curious of their doom! with friendly woe
Thy breaſt will heave, and tears eternal flow.
Part live! the reſt, a lamentable train!
Range the dark bounds of Pluto's dreary reign.
Two, foremoſt in the roll of Mars renown'd,
Whoſe arms with conqueſt in thy cauſe were crown'd,
Fell by diſaſtrous fate; by tempeſts toſt,
A third lives wretched on a diſtant coaſt.
By Neptune reſcu'd from Minerva's hate,
On Gyræ, ſafe Oïlean Ajax ſat,
His ſhip o'erwhelm'd; but frowning on the floods,
Impious he roar'd defiance to the gods;
To his own proweſs all the glory gave,
The pow'r drefrauding who vouchſaf'd to ſave.
This heard the raging ruler of the main;
His ſpear, indignant for ſuch high diſdain,
He lanch'd; dividing with his forky mace
Th' aerial ſummit from the marble baſe:

The rock ruſh'd ſea-ward with impetuous roar
Ingulf'd, and to th' abyſs the boaſter bore.
By Juno's guardian aid, the wat'ry vaſt
Secure of ſtorms, your royal brother paſt:
'Till coaſting nigh the cape, where Malea ſhrouds
Her ſpiry cliffs amid ſurrounding clouds;
A whirling guſt tumultuous from the ſhore,
Acroſs the deep his lab'ring veſſel bore.
In an ill-fated hour the coaſt he gain'd,
Where late in regal pomp Thyeſtes reign'd;
But when his hoary honours bow'd to fate,
Ægyſthus govern'd in paternal ſtate.
The ſurges now ſubſide, the tempeſt ends;
From his tall ſhip the king of men deſcends:
There fondly thinks the gods conclude his toil!
Far from his own domain ſalutes the ſoil:
With rapture oft' the verge of Greece reviews,
And the dear turf with tears of joy bedews.
Him thus exulting on the diſtant ſtrand,
A ſpy diſtinguiſh'd from his airy ſtand;

Ver. 682. ——*And to th' abyſs the boaſter bore.*] It is in the original, "He died, having drunk the ſalt water." This verſe has been omitted in many editions of Homer; and the ancients, ſays Euſtathius, blame Ariſtarchus for not marking it as a verſe that ought to be rejected; the ſimplicity of it conſiſts in the ſenſe, more than in the terms, and it is unworthy of Proteus to treat the death of Ajax with pleaſantry, as he ſeems to do, by adding "having drunk ſalt water:" but why may not Proteus be ſuppoſed to be ſerious, and the term Ἁλμυρὸν ὕδωρ, to imply no more than that he was drowned in the waves of the ocean? I know only one reaſon that can give any colour to the objection, viz. its being poſſibly become a vulgar expreſſion, and uſed commonly in a ludicrous ſenſe; then indeed it is to be avoided in poetry, but it does not follow, becauſe perhaps it might be uſed in this manner in the days of theſe critics, that therefore it was ſo uſed in the days of Homer. What was poetical in the time of the poet, might be grown vulgar in the time of the critics.

To bribe whoſe vigilance, Ægyſtus told
A mighty ſum of ill perſuading gold:
There watch'd this guardian of his guilty fear,
'Till the twelfth moon had wheel'd her pale career;
And now admoniſh'd by his eye, to court
With terror wing'd conveys the dread report.
Of deathful arts expert, his lord employs
The miniſters of blood in dark ſurpriſe:
And twenty youths in radiant mail incas'd,
Cloſe ambuſh'd nigh the ſpacious hall he place'd.
Then bids prepare the hoſpitable treat:
Vain ſhews of love to veil his felon-hate!
To grace the victor's welcome from the wars,
A train of courſers, and triumphal cars
Magnificent he leads: the royal gueſt
Thoughtleſs of ill, accepts the fraudful feaſt,
The troop forth iſſuing from the dark receſs,
With homicidal rage the king oppreſs!
So, whilſt he feeds luxurious in the ſtall,
The ſov'reign of the herd is doom'd to fall.
The partners of his fame and toils at Troy,
Around their lord, a mighty ruin! lie:
Mix'd with the brave, the baſe invaders bleed;
Ægyſthus ſole ſurvives to boaſt the deed.
He ſaid; chill horrours ſhook my ſhiv'ring ſoul,
Rack'd with convulſive pangs in duſt I roll;
And hate, in madneſs of extreme deſpair,
To view the ſun, or breathe the vital air,
But when ſuperiour to the rage of woe,
I ſtood reſtor'd, and tears had ceas'd to flow;
Lenient of grief, the pitying god began—
Forget the brother, and reſume the man:
To fate's ſupreme diſpoſe the dead reſign,
That care be fate's, a ſpeedy paſſage thine.
Still lives the wretch who wrought the death deplor'd,
But lives a victim for thy vengeful ſword;

Unleſs

Unleſs with filial rage Oreſtes glow,
And ſwift prevent the meditated blow:
You timely will return a welcome gueſt,
With him to ſhare the ſad funereal feaſt.
He ſaid: new thoughts my beating heart employ,
My gloomy ſoul receives a gleam of joy.
Fair hope revives; and eager I addreſt
The preſcient godhead to reveal the reſt.
The doom decreed of thoſe diſaſtrous two
I've heard with pain, but oh! the tale purſue;
What third brave ſon of Mars the fates conſtrain
To roam the howling deſart of the main:
Or in eternal ſhade if cold he lies,
Provoke new ſorrow from theſe grateful eyes.
That chief (rejoin'd the god) his race derives
From Ithaca, and wond'rous woes ſurvives;
Laërtes' ſon: girt with circumfluous tides,
He ſtill calamitous conſtraint abides.
Him in Calypſo's cave of late I view'd,
When ſtreaming grief his faded cheek bedew'd.
But vain his pray'r, his arts are vain to move
Th' enamour'd goddeſs, or elude her love:

Ver. 749. *Or in eternal ſhade if cold he lies.*] Proteus in the beginning of his relation had ſaid, that "one perſon was alive, and "remained encloſed by the ocean:" how then comes Menelaus here to ſay, Give me an account of that other perſon who is alive, or dead? Perhaps the ſorrow which Menelaus conceived for his friend Ulyſſes, might make him fear the worſt; and Proteus adding, "encloſed by the ocean," might give a ſuſpicion that he was dead, the words being capable of ambiguity. However this be, it ſets the friendſhip of Menelaus in a ſtrong light: where friendſhip is ſincere, a ſtate of uncertainty is a ſtate of fears, we dread even poſſibilities, and give them an imaginary certainty. Upon this, one of the fineſt compliments that a poet ever made to a patron turns, that of Horace to Mecænas, in the firſt of the Epodes.

His veſſel ſunk, and dear companions loſt,
He lives reluctant on a foreign coaſt.
But oh belov'd by heav'n! reſerv'd to thee
A happier lot the ſmiling fates decree:
Free from that law, beneath whoſe mortal ſway
Matter is change'd, and varying forms decay;
Elyſium ſhall be thine; the bliſsful plains
Of utmoſt earth, where Rhadamanthus reigns.
Joys ever young, unmix'd with pain or fear,
Fill the wide circle of th' eternal year:
Stern winter ſmiles on that auſpicious clime:
The fields are florid with unfading prime:
From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,
Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy ſnow;
But from the breezy deep the bleſt inhale
The fragrant murmurs of the weſtern gale.
This grace peculiar will the gods afford
To thee the ſon of Jove, and beauteous Helen's lord.
He ceas'd, and plunging in the vaſt profound,
Beneath the god the whirling billows bound.
Then ſpeeding back, involv'd in various thought,
My friends attending at the ſhore I ſought.
Arriv'd, the rage of hunger we controll,
'Till night with ſilent ſhade inveſts the pole;

Ver. 765. *Elyſium ſhall be thine; the bliſsful plains*
Of utmoſt earth, &c.]

This is the only place in which the Elyſian field is mentioned in Homer. The conjectures of the ancients are very various about it.

Strabo, ſays Euſtathius, places it not far from Mauruſia, that lies near the Streights: it is ſuppoſed by Bochart, as Dacier obſerves, that the fable is of Phœnician extraction, that Alizuth in Hebrew ſignifies joy or exultation, which word the Greeks, adapting to their way of pronunciation, called *Elyſius*. If this be true, I ſhould come into an opinion that has much prevailed, that the Greeks had heard of Paradiſe from the Hebrews; and that the Hebrews deſcribing Paradiſe as a place of Alizuth, or joy, gave occaſion to all the fables of the Grecian Elyſium.

Then

Then loſe the cares of life in pleaſing reſt.—
Soon as the morn reveals the roſeate eaſt,
With ſails we wing the maſts, our anchors weigh,
Unmoor the fleet, and ruſh into the ſea.
Range'd on the banks, beneath our equal oars
White curl the waves, and the vex'd ocean roars.
Then ſteering backward from the Pharian iſle,
We gain the ſtream of Jove-deſcended Nile:
There quit the ſhips, and on the deſtin'd ſhore
With ritual hecatombs the gods adore:
Their wrath aton'd, to Agamemnon's name
A cenotaph I raiſe of deathleſs fame.
Theſe rites to piety and grief diſcharge'd
The friendly gods a ſpringing gale inlarge'd:
The fleet ſwift tilting o'er the ſurges flew,
'Till Grecian cliffs appear'd, a bliſsful view!
Thy patient ear hath heard me long relate
A ſtory, fruitful of diſaſtrous fate:
And now, young prince, indulge my fond requeſt;
Be Sparta honour'd with his royal gueſt,
'Till from his eaſtern goal, the joyous ſun
His twelfth diurnal race begins to run.
Meantime my train the friendly gifts prepare,
Three ſprightly courſers, and a poliſh'd car:
With theſe, a goblet of capacious mould,
Figur'd with art to dignify the gold,
(Form'd for libation to the gods) ſhall prove
A pledge and monument of ſacred love.
My quick return, young Ithacus rejoin'd,
Damps the warm wiſhes of my raptur'd mind:
Did not my fate my needful haſte conſtrain,
Charm'd by your ſpeech, ſo graceful and humane,

Ver. 806. *Three ſprightly courſers.*] How comes it to paſs that Menelaus proffers three horſes to Telemachus? This was a compleat ſet among the ancients, they uſed one pole-horſe and two leaders. *Euſtathius.*

Loſt

Loſt in delight the circling year would roll,
While deep attention fix'd my liſt'ning ſoul.
But now to Pyle permit my deſtin'd way,
My lov'd aſſociates chide my long delay:
In dear remembrance of your royal grace,
I take the preſent of the promis'd vaſe;
The courſers for the champaign ſports, retain;
That gift our barren rocks will render vain:
Horrid with cliffs, our meagre land allows
Thin herbage for the mountain goat to browze,
But neither mead nor plain ſupplies, to feed
The ſprightly courſer, or indulge his ſpeed:
To ſea-ſurrounded realms the gods aſſign
Small tract or fertile lawn, the leaſt to mine.
His hand the king with tender paſſion preſs'd,
And ſmiling thus, the royal youth addreſs'd:
O early worth! a ſoul ſo wiſe, and young,
Proclaims you from the ſage Ulyſſes ſprung.
Selected from my ſtores, of matchleſs price
An urn ſhall recompence your prudent choice:
Not mean the maſſy mould of ſilver, grace'd
By vulcan's art, the verge with gold enchas'd;
A pledge the ſcepter'd pow'r of Sidon gave,
When to his realm I plough'd the orient wave.
Thus they alternate; while with artful care
The menial train the regal feaſt prepare:
The firſtlings of the flock are doom'd to dye;
Rich fragrant wines the chearing bowl ſupply;
A female band the gift of Ceres bring;
And the gilt roofs with genial triumph ring.
Meanwhile, in Ithaca, the ſuitor-pow'rs
In active games divide their jovial hours:

Ver. 822. *That gift our barren rocks will render vain.*] This paſſage where Telemachus refuſes the horſes has been much obſerved, and turned to a moral ſenſe, viz. as a leſſon to men to deſire nothing but what is ſuitable to their conditions.

In

In areas vary'd with moſaic art,
Some whirl the diſk, and ſome the jav'lin dart.
Aſide, ſequeſter'd from the vaſt reſort,
Antinous ſat ſpectator of the ſport;
With great Eurymachus, of worth confeſt,
And high deſcent, ſuperiour to the reſt;
Whom young Noëmon lowly thus addreſt.
My ſhip equipp'd within the neighb'ring port,
The prince, departing for the Pylian court,
Requeſted for his ſpeed; but courteous, ſay
When ſteers he home, or why this long delay?
For Elis I ſhould ſail with utmoſt ſpeed,
T' import twelve mares which there luxurious feed,
And twelve young mules a ſtrong laborious race,
New to the plough, unpractis'd in the trace.
Unknowing of the courſe to Pyle deſign'd,
A ſudden horrour ſeiz'd on either mind:
The prince in rural bow'r they fondly thought,
Numb'ring his flocks and herds, not far remote.
Relate, Antinous cries, devoid of guile,
When ſpread the prince his ſail for diſtant Pyle?
Did choſen chiefs acroſs the gulfy main
Attend his voyage, or domeſtic train?
Spontaneous did you ſpeed his ſecret courſe,
Or was the veſſel ſeiz'd by fraud or force?
With willing duty, not reluctant mind,
(Noëmon cry'd) the veſſel was reſign'd.
Who in the balance, with the great affairs
Of courts preſume to weigh their private cares?
With him, the peerage next in pow'r to you:
And Mentor, captain of the lordly crew,
Or ſome celeſtial in his rev'rend form.
Safe from the ſecret rock and adverſe ſtorm,
Pilots the courſe: for when the glimm'ring ray
Of yeſter dawn diſclos'd the tender day,

Mentor

Mentor himſelf I ſaw, and much admir'd.—
Then ceas'd the youth, and from the court retir'd.
Confounded and appall'd, th' unfiniſh'd game
The ſuitors quit, and all to council came:
Antinous firſt th' aſſembled peers addreſt,
Rage ſparkling in his eyes, and burning in his breaſt.
O ſhame to manhood! ſhall one daring boy
The ſcheme of all our happineſs deſtroy?
Fly unperceiv'd, ſeducing half the flow'r
Of nobl-s, and invite a foreign pow'r?
The pond'rous engine rais'd to cruſh us all,
Recoiling, on his head is ſure to fall.
Inſtant prepare me, on the neighb'ring ſtrand,
With twenty choſen mates a veſſel mann'd;
For ambuſh'd cloſe beneath the Samian ſhore
His ſhip returning ſhall my ſpies explore:
He ſoon his raſhneſs ſhall with life atone,
Seek for his father's fate, but find his own.
With vaſt applauſe the ſentence all approve;
Then riſe, and to the feaſtful hall remove:

Ver. 896. *For ambuſh'd cloſe*, &c.] We have here another uſe which the poet makes of the voyage of Telemachus. Euſtathius remarks that theſe incidents not only diverſify but enliven the poem. But it may be aſked why the poet makes not uſe of ſo fair an opportunity to inſert a gallant action of Telemachus, and draw him not as eluding, but defeating his adverſaries? The anſwer is eaſy; That the ſuitors ſailed compleatly armed, and Telemachus unprovided of any weapons: and therefore Homer conſults credibilty, and forbears to paint his young hero in the colours of a knight in romance, who upon all diſadvantages engages and defeats his oppoſers. But then to what purpoſe is this ambuſh of the ſuitors, and what part of the deſign of the poem is carried on by it? The very chief aim of it; To ſhew the ſufferings of Ulyſſes: he is unfortunate in all relations of life, as a king, as an huſband, and here very eminently as a father; theſe ſufferings are laid down in the propoſition of the Odyſſey as eſſential to the poem, and conſequently this ambuſh laid by the ſuitors againſt the life of Telemachus is an eſſential ornament.

Swift to the queen the herald Medon ran,
Who heard the conſult of the dire divan:
Before her dome the royal matron ſtands,
And thus the meſſage of his haſte demands.
What will the ſuitors? muſt my ſervant train
Th' allotted labours of the day refrain,
For them to form ſome exquiſite repaſt?
Heav'n grant this feſtival may prove their laſt!
Or if they ſtill muſt live, from me remove
The double plague of luxury and love!
Forbear ye ſons of inſolence! forbear,
In riot to conſume a wretched heir.
In the young ſoul illuſtrious thought to raiſe,
Were ye not tutor'd with Ulyſſes' praiſe?
Have not your fathers oft' my lord defin'd,
Gentle of ſpeech, beneficent of mind?
Some kings with arbitrary rage devour,
Or in their tyrant-minions veſt the pow'r:

Ver. 906. *The ſpeech of Penelope.*] Longinus in particular commends this ſpeech as a true picture of a perſon that feels various emotions of ſoul, and is borne by every guſt of paſſion from ſentiment to ſentiment, with ſudden and unexpected tranſitions. There is ſome obſcurity in the Greek; this ariſes from the warmth with which ſhe ſpeaks, ſhe has not leiſure to explain herſelf fully, a circumſtance natural to a perſon in anger.

Penelope gives a very beautiful picture of Ulyſſes: "The beſt "of princes are allowed to have their favourites, and give a greater "ſhare of affection than ordinary to particular perſons. But "Ulyſſes was a father to all his people alike, and loved them all "as his children; a father, though he bears a more tender affec-"tion to one child than to another, yet ſhews them all an equal "treatment; thus alſo a good king is not ſwayed by inclination, "but juſtice, towards all his ſubjects." *Dacier.*

One circumſtance is very remarkable, and gives us a full view of a perſon in anger; at the very ſight of Medon, Penelope flies out into paſſion; ſhe gives him not time to ſpeak one ſyllable, but ſpeaks herſelf as if all the ſuitors were preſent, and reproaches them in the perſon of Medon, though Medon is juſt to her and Ulyſſes; but anger is an undiſtinguiſhing paſſion.

Ulyſſes let no partial favours fall:
The people's parent, he protected all:
But abſent now, profidious and ingrate!
His ſtores ye ravage, and uſurp his ſtate.
He thus; O were the woes you ſpeak the worſt!
They form a deed more odious and accurſt;
More dreadful than your boding ſoul divines:
But pitying Jove avert the dire deſigns!
The darling object of your royal care
Is mark'd to periſh in a deathful ſnare;
Before he anchors in his native port,
From Pyle re-ſailing and the Spartan court;
Horrid to ſpeak! in ambuſh is decreed
The hope and heir of Ithaca to bleed!
Sudden ſhe ſunk beneath the weighty woes,
The vital ſtreams a chilling horrour froze:
The big round tear ſtands trembling in her eye,
And on her tongue imperfect accents dye.
At length, in tender language, interwove
With ſighs, ſhe thus expreſs'd her anxious love.
Why raſhly wou'd my ſon his fate explore,
Ride the wild waves, and quit the ſafer ſhore?
Did he with all the greatly wretched, crave
A blank oblivion, and untimely grave!
'Tis not, reply'd the ſage, to Medon giv'n
To know, if ſome inhabitant of heav'n,

Ver. 941. *Ride the wild waves*——] Were this paſſage to be rendered literally, it would run thus, "climb the ſwift ſhips, "which are horſes to men on the ſeas." Euſtathius obſerves the alluſion is very juſt, and that the only doubt is, whether it be brought in opportunely by Penelope? It may be doubted, if the mind could find leaſure to introduce ſuch alluſions? Dacier anſwers, that Penelope ſpeaks thus through indignation: the grief that ſhe conceives at the hardineſs of men, in finding out a way to paſs the ſeas as well as land, furniſhed her with theſe figures very naturally; for figures are agreeable to paſſion.

In

In his young breaſt the daring thought inſpir'd;
Or if alone with filial duty fir'd,
The winds and waves he tempts in early bloom,
Studious to learn his abſent father's doom.
The ſage retir'd: unable to controul
The mighty griefs that ſwell her lab'ring ſoul,
Rolling convulſive on the floor, is ſeen
The piteous object of a proſtrate queen.
Words to her dumb complaint a pauſe ſupplies,
And breath, to waſte in unavailing cries.
Around their ſov'reign wept the menial fair,
To whom ſhe thus addreſs'd her deep deſpair.
Behold a wretch whom all the gods conſign
To woe! Did ever ſorrows equal mine?
Long to my joys my deareſt lord is loſt,
His country's buckler, and the Grecian boaſt:
Now from my fond embrace, by tempeſts torn,
Our other column of the ſtate is borne:
Nor took a kind adieu: nor ſought conſent!—
Unkind confed'rates in his dire intent!
Ill ſuits it with your ſhews of duteous zeal,
From me the purpos'd voyage to conceal:
Tho' at the ſolemn midnight hour he roſe,
Why did you fear to trouble my repoſe?
He either had obey'd my fond deſire,
Or ſeen his mother pierce'd with grief expire.
Bid Dolius quick attend, the faithful ſlave
Whom to my nuptial train Icarius gave,
T' attend the fruit-groves: with inceſſant ſpeed
He ſhall this violence of death decreed,
To good Laertes tell. Experience'd age
May timely intercept the ruffian-rage,
Convene the tribes, the murd'rous plot reveal,
And to their pow'r to ſave his race appeal.
Then Euryclea thus. My deareſt dread!
Tho' to the ſword I bow this hoary head,

Or if a dungeon be the pain decreed,
I own me conſcious of th' unpleaſing deed:
Auxiliar to his flight, my aid implor'd,
With wine and viands I the veſſel ſtor'd:
A ſolemn oath, impos'd, the ſecret ſeal'd,
'Till the twelfth dawn the light of heav'n reveal'd.
Dreading th' effect of a fond mother's fear,
He dar'd not violate your royal ear.
But bathe, and in imperial robes array'd,
Pay due devotions to the * martial maid,
And reſt affiance'd in her guardian aid.
Send not to good Laertes, nor engage
In toils of ſtate the miſeries of age:
'Tis impious to ſurmiſe, the pow'rs divine
To ruin doom the Jove-deſcended line:
Long ſhall the race of juſt Arceſius reign,
And iſles remote enlarge his old domain.

The

* Minerva.

Ver. 998. *And iſles remote enlarge his old domain.*] Dacier offers a criticiſm upon theſe laſt words of Euryclea: it cannot be imagined theſe fertile fields can be ſpoken of Ithaca; Plutarch's deſcription of it is entirely contradictory to this: "Ithaca, ſays he, is "rough and mountainous, fit only to breed goats; upon cultiva-"tion it ſcarce yields any fruits, and theſe ſo worthleſs, as ſcarce "to recompenſe the labour of gathering." Homer therefore by this expreſſion intended the other dominions of Ulyſſes, ſuch as Cephalenia, &c.

But I queſtion not, that the whole dominions of Ulyſſes are included, Ithaca as well as Cephalenia; for though Ithaca was mountainous, yet the vallies were fruitful, according to the deſcription of it in the thirteenth of the Odyſſey.

The rugged ſoil allows no level ſpace
For flying chariots, or the rapid race;
Yet not ungrateful to the peaſant's pain,
Suffices fulneſs to the ſwelling grain:
The loaded trees their various fruits produce,
And cluſt'ring grapes afford a gen'rous juice, &c.

As

The queen her ſpeech with calm attention hears,
Her eyes reſtrain the ſilver-ſtreaming tears:
She bathes, and rob'd, the ſacred dome aſcends:
Her pious ſpeed a female train attends:
The ſalted cakes in caniſters are laid,
And thus the queen invokes Minerva's aid.

Daughter divine of Jove, whoſe arm can wield
Th' avenging bolt, and ſhake the dreadful ſhield!
If e'er Ulyſſes to thy fane preferr'd
The beſt and choiceſt of his flock and herd;
Hear, goddeſs, hear, by thoſe oblations won;
And for the pious ſire preſerve the ſon:
His wiſh'd return with happy pow'r befriend,
And on the ſuitors let thy wrath deſcend.

She ceas'd; ſhrill extaſies of joy declare
The fav'ring goddeſs preſent to the pray'r:
The ſuitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice
A ſignal of her hymenæal choice:

Whilſt

As for her remark upon ἀπόπροθι, it is of no validity; the word ſtands in oppoſition to Δώματα, and implies no more than here, or at a diſtance in general.

Ver. 1015. *The ſuitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice*
A ſignal of her hymenæal choice.]

It may be aſked whence this conjecture of the ſuitors ariſes? Penelope is deſcribed as weeping grievouſly, and fainting away, and yet immediately the ſuitors conclude ſhe is preparing for the nuptials. Euſtathius anſwers, that undoubtedly the ſuitors underſtood the queen had purified herſelf with water, and ſupplicated the goddeſs Minerva, though the poet omits the relation of ſuch little particularities. But whence is it that the poet gives a greater ſhare of wiſdom to Euryclea than to Penelope? Penelope commands a ſervant to fly with the news of the abſence of Telemachus to Laertes, which could not at all advantage Telemachus, and only grieve Laertes: Euryclea immediately diverts her from that vain intention, adviſes her to have recourſe to heaven, and not add miſery to the already miſerable Laertes: this is wiſdom in Euryclea. But it muſt be confeſſed that the other is nature in Penelope: Euryclea

Whilſt one moſt jovial thus accoſts the board;
" Too late the queen ſelects a ſecond lord:
" In evil hour the nuptial rite intends,
" When o'er her ſon diſaſtrous death impends." 1020
Thus he unſkill'd of what the fates provide!
But with ſevere rebuke Antinous cry'd.
Theſe empty vaunts will make the voyage vain;
Alarm not with diſcourſe the menial train:
The great event with ſilent hope attend; 1025
Our deeds alone our counſel muſt commend.
His ſpeech thus ended ſhort, he frowning roſe,
And twenty chiefs renown'd for valour choſe:
Down to the ſtrand he ſpeeds with haughty ſtrides,
Where anchor'd in the bay the veſſel rides, 1030
Replete with mail and military ſtore,
In all her tackle trim to quit the ſhore.
The deſp'rate crew aſcend, unfurl the ſails;
(The ſea-ward prow invites the tardy gales)
Then take repaſt, 'till Heſperus diſplay'd 1035
His golden circlet in the weſtern ſhade.
Meantime the queen without refection due,
Heart-wounded, to the bed of ſtate withdrew:
In her ſad breaſt the prince's fortunes roll,
And hope and doubt alternate ſeize her ſoul. 1040

is calm, Penelope in a paſſion: and Homer would have been a very bad painter of human nature, if he had drawn Penelope, thus heated with paſſion, in the mild temper of Euryclea; grief and reſentment give Penelope no time to deliberate, whereas Euryclea is leſs concerned, and conſequently capable of thinking with more tranquillity.

Ver. 1022. *With rebuke ſevere Antinous cry'd.*] Antinous ſpeaks thus in return to what had been before ſaid by one of the ſuitors concerning Telemachus, viz. " the queen little imagines that her " ſon's death approaches;" he fears leſt Penelope ſhould know their intentions, and hinder their meaſures by raiſing the ſubjects of Ithaca that ſtill retained their fidelity. *Dacier.*

So

So when the wood man's toil her cave ſurrounds,
And with the hunter's cry the grove reſounds;
With grief and rage the mother lion ſtung,
Fearleſs herſelf, yet trembles for her young.
While penſive in the ſilent ſlumb'rous ſhade,
Sleep's gentle pow'rs her drooping eyes invade;
Minerva, life-like on imbody'd air
Impreſs'd the form of Iphthima the fair:
(Icarius' daughter ſhe, whoſe blooming charms
Allur'd Eumelus to her virgin-arms;
A ſcepter'd lord, who o'er the fruitful plain
Of Theſſaly, wide ſtretch'd his ample reign:)
As Pallas will'd, along the ſable ſkies
To calm the queen the phantom-ſiſter flies.
Swift on the regal dome deſcending right,
The bolted valves are pervious to her flight.
Cloſe to her head the pleaſing viſion ſtands,
And thus performs Minerva's high commands.
O why, Penelope, this cauſeleſs fear,
To render ſleep's ſoft bleſſing unſincere?
Alike devout to ſorrow's dire extreme
The day-reflection, and the midnight-dream!
Thy ſon, the gods propitious will reſtore,
And bid thee ceaſe his abſence to deplore.

Ver. 1041. *So when the woodman's toil,* &c.] The poet, to ſhew the majeſty and high ſpirit of Penelope, compares her to a lioneſs: he manages the alluſion very artfully: he deſcribes the lioneſs not as exerting any dreadful acts of violence, (for ſuch a compariſon is only proper to be applied to a hero) but incloſed by her enemies; which at once ſhews both her danger and nobleneſs of ſpirit under it: it is in the Greek δόλιον κύκλον, which may ſignify either a circle of toils or nets, or a circle of enemies: the former is perhaps preferable, as correſponding beſt with the condition of Penelope, who was ſurrounded with the ſecret ambuſhes and ſnares of the ſuitors. *Euſtathius.*

To

To whom the queen, (whilſt yet her penſive mind
Was in the ſilent gates of ſleep confin'd)
O ſiſter, to my ſoul for ever dear,
Why this firſt viſit to reprove my fear?
How in a realm ſo diſtant ſhould you know
From what deep ſource my ceaſeleſs ſorrows flow?
To all my hope my royal lord is loſt,
His country's buckler, and the Grecian boaſt:
And with conſummate woe to weigh me down,
The heir of all his honours, and his crown,
My darling ſon is fled! an eaſy prey
To the fierce ſtorms, or men more fierce than they:
Who in a league of blood aſſociates ſworn,
Will intercept th' unwary youth's return.
Courage reſume, the ſhadowy form reply'd,
In the protecting care of heav'n confide:
On him attends the blue-ey'd martial maid;
What earthly can implore a ſurer aid?

Ver. 1073. *And with conſummate woe*, etc.] In the original, Penelope ſays plainly, ſhe is more concerned for her ſon than her huſband. I ſhall tranſlate Dacier's obſervations upon this paſſage. We ought not to reproach Penelope for this ſeemingly ſhocking declaration, in preferring a ſon to a huſband: her ſentiment is natural and juſt; ſhe had all the reaſon in the world to believe that Ulyſſes was dead, ſo that all her hopes, all her affection was entirely placed upon Telemachus: his loſs therefore muſt unavoidably touch her with the higheſt degree of ſenſibility; if he is loſt, ſhe can have recourſe to no ſecond comfort. But why may we not allow the reaſon which Penelope herſelf gives for this ſuperiority of ſorrow for Telemachus? "Telemachus, (ſays ſhe), is unexperienced in the world, and unable to contend with difficulties: whereas Ulyſſes knew how to extricate himſelf upon all emergencies." This is a ſufficient reaſon why ſhe ſhould fear more for Telemachus than Ulyſſes: her affection might be greater for Ulyſſes than Telemachus, yet her fears might be greater for the ſon than the huſband, Ulyſſes being capable to ſurmount dangers by experience, Telemachus being new to all difficulties.

Me

Me now the guardian goddeſs deigns to ſend,
To bid thee patient his return attend.
  The queen replies: If in the bleſt abodes
A goddeſs, thou haſt commerce with the gods;
Say, breathes my lord the bliſsful realm of light,
Or lies he wrapt in ever during night?
  Enquire not of his doom, the phantom cries,
I ſpeak not all the counſel of the ſkies:
Nor muſt indulge with vain diſcourſe, or long,
The windy ſatisfaction of the tongue.
  Swift thro' the valves the viſionary fair
Repaſs'd, and viewleſs mix'd with common air.
The queen awakes, deliver'd of her woes:
With florid joy her heart dilating glows:
The viſion, manifeſt of future fate,
Makes her with hope her ſon's arrival wait.
  Meantime the ſuitors plough the wat'ry plain,
Telemachus in thought already ſlain!
When ſight of leſs'ning Ithaca was loſt,
Their ſail directed for the Samian coaſt,

Ver. 1089. The action of this book takes up the ſpace of two nights and one day, ſo that from the opening of the poem to the introduction of Ulyſſes are ſix days completed.

But how long a time Telemachus afterwards ſtaid with Menelaus is a queſtion, which has employed ſome modern French critics; one of which maintains, that he ſtaid no longer than theſe two nights at Lacedæmon: but it is evident from the ſequel of the Odyſſey, that Telemachus arrived again at Ithaca two days after Ulyſſes; but Ulyſſes was twenty-nine days in paſſing from Ogygia to Ithaca, and conſequently during that whole time Telemachus muſt have been abſent from Ithaca. The ground of that critic's miſtake was from the ſilence of Homer as to the exact time of his ſtay, which was of no importance, being diſtinguiſhed by no action, and only in an epiſodical part. The ſame thing led me into the like error in the note on v. 421 of the ſecond book, where it was ſaid that Telemachus returned to Ithaca in leſs than twelve days.

A ſmall but verdant iſle appear'd in view,
And Aſteris th' advancing pilot knew:
An ample port the rocks projected form,
To break the rolling waves, and ruffling ſtorm:
That ſafe receſs they gain with happy ſpeed,
And in cloſe ambuſh wait the murd'rous deed.

THE

THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK V.

THE ARGUMENT.

The departure of Ulyſſes from Calypſo.

Pallas in a council of the gods complains of the detention of Ulyſſes in the iſlands of Calypſo; whereupon Mercury is ſent to command his removal. The ſeat of Calypſo deſcribed. She conſents with much difficulty, and Ulyſſes builds a veſſel with his own hands, on which he embarks. Neptune overtakes him with a terrible tempeſt, in which he is ſhipwrecked, and in the laſt danger of death; till Leucothea a ſea-goddeſs aſſiſts him, and after innumerable perils he gets aſhore on Phæacia.

THE ſaffron morn, with early bluſhes ſpread,
Now roſe refulgent from Tithonus' bed;
With new-born day to gladden mortal ſight,
And gild the courts of heav'n with ſacred light.
Then

* Ulyſſes makes his firſt entry in this book. It may be aſked where properly is the beginning of the action? It is not neceſſary that the beginning of the action ſhould be the beginning of the poem; there is a natural and an artificial order, and Homer makes uſe of the latter. The action of the Odyſſey properly begins neither with the poem, nor with the appearance of Ulyſſes here, but with the relation he makes of his departure from Troy in the ninth book. Boſſu has very judiciouſly remarked, that in the conſtitution of the fable, the poet ought not to make the departure

of

Then met th' eternal ſynod of the ſky,
Before the god who thunders from on high,
Supreme in might, ſublime in majeſty.
Pallas, to theſe, deplores th' unequal fates
Of wiſe Ulyſſes, and his toils relates;
Her hero's danger touch'd the pitying pow'r,
The nymph's ſeducements, and the magic bow'r.

Thus

of a prince from his own country the foundation of his poem, but his return, and his ſtay in other places involuntary. For if the ſtay of Ulyſſes had been voluntary, he would have been guilty in ſome degree of all the diſorders that happened during his abſence. Thus in this book Ulyſſes firſt appears in a deſolate iſland, ſitting in tears by the ſide of the ocean, and looking upon it as the obſtacle to his return.

This artificial order is of great uſe; it cuts off all languiſhing and unentertaining incidents, and paſſes over thoſe intervals of time that are void of action; it gives continuity to the ſtory, and at firſt tranſports the reader into the middle of the ſubject. In the beginning of the Odyſſey, the gods command Mercury to go down to the iſland of Ogygia, and charge Calypſo to diſmiſs Ulyſſes: one would think the poem was to end in the compaſs of a few lines, the poet beginning the action ſo near the end of the ſtory; and we wonder how he finds matter to fill up his poem, in the little ſpace of time that intervenes between his firſt appearance and his re-eſtabliſhment.

This book, as well as the firſt, opens with an aſſembly of the gods. This is done to give an importance to his poem, and to prepare the mind of the reader to expect every thing that is great and noble, when heaven is engaged in the care and protection of his heroes. Both theſe aſſemblies are placed very properly, ſo as not to interrupt the ſeries of action: the firſt aſſembly of the gods is only preparatory to introduce the action: and the ſecond is no more than a bare tranſition from Telemachus to Ulyſſes; from the recital of the tranſactions in Ithaca, to what more immediately regards the perſon of Ulyſſes.

In the former council, both the voyage of Telemachus and the return of Ulyſſes were determined at the ſame time: the day of that aſſembly is the firſt day both of the principal action (which is the return of Ulyſſes), and of the incident, which is the voyage

Thus ſhe began her plaint. Immortal Jove!
And you who fill the bliſsful ſeats above!
Let kings no more with gentle mercy ſway,
Or bleſs a people willing to obey,
But cruſh the nations with an iron rod,
And ev'ry monarch be the ſcourge of God:
If from your thoughts Ulyſſes you remove,
Who rul'd his ſubjects with a father's love.
Sole in an iſle, encircled by the main,
Abandon'd, baniſh'd from his native reign,
Unbleſt he ſighs, detain'd by lawleſs charms,
And preſs'd unwilling in Calypſo's arms.
Nor friends are there, nor veſſels to convey,
Nor oars to cut th' immeaſurable way.
And now fierce traitors, ſtudious to deſtroy
His only ſon, their ambuſh'd fraud employ;
Who, pious, following his great father's fame,
To ſacred Pylos and to Sparta came.
What words are theſe (reply'd the pow'r who forms
The clouds of night, and darkens heav'n with ſtorms)
Is not already in thy ſoul decreed,
The chief's return ſhall make the guilty bleed?
What cannot wiſdom do? Thou may'ſt reſtore
The ſon in ſafety to his native ſhore;
While the fell foes who late in ambuſh lay,
With fraud defeated meaſure back their way.

of Telemachus; with this difference, that the incident was immediately put in practice, by the deſcent of Minerva to Ithaca; and the execution of it takes up the four preceding books; whereas the principal action was only then prepared, and the execution deferred to the preſent book, where Mercury is actually ſent to Calypſo.

Euſtathius therefore judges rightly when he ſays, that in the firſt council, the ſafety alone of Ulyſſes was propoſed; but the means how to bring it about are here under conſultation, which makes the neceſſity of the ſecond council.

Then thus to Hermes the command was giv'n.
Hermes, thou choſen meſſenger of heav'n!
Go, to the nymph be theſe our orders borne:
'Tis Jove's decree Ulyſſes ſhall return:
The patient man ſhall view his old abodes,
Nor help by mortal hand, nor guiding gods:
In twice ten days ſhall fertile Scheria find,
Alone, and floating to the wave and wind.
The bold Phæacian there, whoſe haughty line
Is mixt with gods, half human, half divine,
The chief ſhall honour as ſome heav'nly gueſt,
And ſwift tranſport him to his place of reſt.
His veſſels loaded with a plenteous ſtore
Of braſs, of veſtures, and reſplendent ore;
(A richer prize than if his joyful iſle
Receiv'd him charge'd with Ilion's noble ſpoil)
His friends, his country, he ſhall ſee, tho' late;
Such is our ſovereign will, and ſuch is fate.
He ſpoke. The god who mounts the winged winds
Faſt to his feet the golden pinions binds,
That high thro' fields of air his flight ſuſtain
O'er the wide earth, and o'er the boundleſs main.
He graſps the wand that cauſes ſleep to fly,
Or in ſoft ſlumber ſeals the wakeful eye:
Then ſhoots from heav'n to high Pieria's ſteep,
And ſtoops incumbent on the rolling deep.

Ver. 46. ——— *Whoſe haughty line*
Is mixt with gods, ———]

The Phæacians were the inhabitants of Scheria, ſometimes called Drepanè, afterwards Corcyra, now Corfu, in the poſſeſſion of the Venetians. But it may be aſked in what theſe people reſemble the gods? They are deſcribed as a moſt effeminate nation: whence then this godlike quality? Euſtathius anſwers, that is either from their undiſturbed felicity, or from their divine quality of general benevolence: he prefers the latter; but from the general character of the Phæacians, I ſhould prefer the former.

So

So wat'ry fowl, that ſeek their fiſhy food,
With wings expanded o'er the foaming flood,
Now ſailing ſmooth the level ſurface ſweep,
Now dip their pinions in the briny deep.
Thus o'er the world of waters Hermes flew,
'Till now the diſtant iſland roſe in view:
Then ſwift aſcending from the azure wave,
He took the path that winded to the cave.
Large was the grot, in which the nymph he found,
(The fair hair'd nymph with ev'ry beauty crown'd)
She ſat and ſung; the rocks reſound her lays:
The cave was brighten'd with a riſing blaze:
Cedar and frankincenſe, an od'rous pile,
Flam'd on the hearth, and wide perfum'd the iſle;
While ſhe with work and ſong the time divides,
And thro' the loom the golden ſhuttle guides.

Ver. 72. ——— *The nymph he found.*] Homer here introduces an epiſode of Calypſo: and, as every incident ought to have ſome relation to the main deſign of the poem, it may be aſked what relation this bears to the other parts of it? A very eſſential one: the ſufferings of Ulyſſes are the ſubject of the Odyſſey: here we find him incloſed in an iſland: all his calamities ariſe from his abſence from his own country: Calypſo then, who detains him, is the cauſe of all his calamities. It is with great judgement that the poet feigns him to be reſtrained by a deity, rather than a mortal. It might have appeared ſomewhat derogatory from the prudence and courage of Ulyſſes, not to have been able by art or ſtrength to have freed himſelf from the power of a mortal: but by this conduct the poet at once excuſes his hero, and aggravates his misfortunes: he is detained involuntarily, but it is a goddeſs who detains him, and it is no diſgrace for a man not to be able to overpower a deity.

Boſſu obſerves, that the art of diſguiſe is part of the character of Ulyſſes: now this is implied in the name of Calypſo, which ſignifies concealment, or ſecret. The poet makes his hero ſtay ſeven whole years with this goddeſs; ſhe taught him ſo well, that he afterwards loſt no opportunities of putting her inſtructions in practice, and does nothing without diſguiſe.

Without the grot, a various ſilvan ſcene
Appear'd around, and groves of living green;
Poplars and alder ever quiv'ring play'd,
And nodding cypreſs form'd a fragrant ſhade;
On whoſe high branches, waving with the ſtorm,
The birds of broadeſt wing their manſion form,
The cough, the ſea-mew, the loquacious crow,
And ſcream aloft, and ſkim the deeps below.
Depending vines the ſhelving cavern ſcreen,
With purple cluſters bluſhing thro' the green.
Four limpid fountains from the clefts diſtil,
And ev'ry fountain pours a ſev'ral rill,
In mazy windings wand'ring down the hill:
Where bloomy meads with vivid greens were crown'd,
And glowing violets threw odours round.
A ſcene, where if a god ſhould caſt his ſight,
A god might gaze, and wander with delight!

Ver. 80. *The bower of Calypſo.*] It is impoſſible for a painter to draw a more admirable rural landſchape: the bower of Calypſo is the principal figure, ſurrounded with a ſhade of different trees: green meadows adorned with flowers, beautiful fountains, and vines loaded with cluſters of grapes, and birds hovering in the air, are ſeen in the livelieſt colours in Homer's poetry. But whoever obſerves the particular trees, plants, birds, &c. will find another beauty of propriety in this deſcription, every part being adapted, and the whole ſcene drawn agreeable to a country ſituate by the ſea.

Ver. 89. *The purple cluſires bluſhing thro' the green.*] Euſtathius endeavours to fix the ſeaſon of the year when Ulyſſes departed from that iſland: he concludes it to be in the latter end of autumn, or the beginning of winter; for Calypſo is deſcribed as making uſe of a fire; ſo is Arete in the ſixth book, and Eumæus and Ulyſſes in other parts of the Odyſſey. This gives us reaſon to conclude, that the ſummer heats were paſt; and what makes it ſtill more probable is, that a vine is in this place ſaid to be loaded with grapes, which plainly confines the ſeaſon of the year to the autumn.

Joy

Joy touch'd the meſſenger of heav'n: he ſtay'd
Entrance'd, and all the bliſsful haunt ſurvey'd.
Him, ent'ring in the cave, Calypſo knew;
For pow'rs celeſtial to each other's view
Stand ſtill confeſt, tho' diſtant far they lie
To habitants of earth, or ſea, or ſky.
But ſad Ulyſſes, by himſelf apart,
Pour'd the big ſorrows of his ſwelling heart;
All on the lonely ſhore he ſat to weep,
And roll'd his eyes around the reſtleſs deep;
Tow'rd his lov'd coaſt he roll'd his eyes in vain,
'Till dimm'd with riſing grief, they ſtream'd again.
Now graceful ſeated on her ſhining throne,
To Hermes thus the nymph divine begun.
God of the golden wand! on what beheſt
Arriv'ſt thou here, an unexpected gueſt?
Lov'd as thou art, thy free injunctions lay;
'Tis mine, with joy and duty to obey.

Ver. 103. *But ſad Ulyſſes, by himſelf apart.*] Euſtathius imagines, that the poet deſcribes Ulyſſes abſent from Calypſo, to the end that Calyſo might lay a ſeeming obligation upon Ulyſſes, by appearing to diſmiſs him voluntarily: for Ulyſſes being abſent, could not know that Mercury had commanded his departure; ſo that this favour appears to proceed from the ſole kindneſs of the goddeſs. Dacier diſlikes this obſervation, and ſhews that decency requires the abſence of Ulyſſes; if the poet had deſcribed him in the company of Calypſo, it might have given ſuſpicion of an amorous diſpoſition, and he might ſeem content with his abſence from his country: but the very nature of the poem requires that he ſhould be continually endeavouring to return to it: the poet therefore with great judgement deſcribes him agreeably to his character; his mind is entirely taken up with his misfortunes, and neglecting all the pleaſures which a goddeſs could confer, he entertains himſelf with his own melancholy reflections, ſitting in ſolitude upon the ſea ſhore.

Till now a ſtranger, in a happy hour
Approach, and taſte the dainties of my bow'r.
Thus having ſpoke, the nymph the table ſpread,
(Ambroſial cates, with nectar roſy red)
Hermes the hoſpitable rite partook,
Divine refection! then recruited, ſpoke.
What mov'd this journey from my native ſky,
A goddeſs aſks, nor can a god deny:
Hear then the truth. By mighty Jove's command
Unwilling, have I trod this pleaſing land;
For who, ſelf mov'd, with weary wing wou'd ſweep
Such length of ocean and unmeaſur'd deep:
A world of waters! far from all the ways
Where men frequent, or ſacred altars blaze?
But to Jove's will ſubmiſſion we muſt pay;
What pow'r ſo great, to dare to diſobey?
A man, he ſays, a man reſides with thee,
Of all his kind moſt worn with miſery:
The Greeks (whoſe arms for nine long years employ'd
Their force on Ilion, in the tenth deſtroy'd)
At length embarking in a luckleſs hour,
With conqueſt proud, incens'd Minerva's pow'r:
Hence on the guilty race her vengeance hurl'd
With ſtorms purſu'd them thro' the liquid world.
There all his veſſels ſunk beneath the wave!
There all his dear companions found their grave!
Sav'd from the jaws of death by heav'n's decree,
The tempeſt drove him to theſe ſhores and thee.
Him, Jove now orders to his native lands
Straight to diſmiſs; ſo deſtiny commands:
Impatient fate his near return attends,
And calls him to his country, and his friends.
Ev'n to her inmoſt ſoul the goddeſs ſhook;
Then thus her anguiſh and her paſſion broke.
Ungracious gods! with ſpite and envy curſt!
Still to your own ætherial race the worſt!

Ye envy mortal and immortal joy,
And love, the only ſweet of life, deſtroy.
Did ever goddeſs by her charms engage
A favour'd mortal, and not feel your rage?
So when Aurora ſought Orion's love,
Her joys diſturb'd your bliſsful hours above,
'Till in Ortygia, Dian's winged dart
Had pierce'd the hapleſs hunter to the heart.
So when the covert of the thrice-ear'd field
Saw ſtately Ceres to her paſſion yield,
Scarce could Iäſion taſte her heav'nly charms,
But Jove's ſwift lightning ſcorch'd him in her arms.

Ver. 155. *Orion.*] The love of Calypſo to Ulyſſes might ſeem too bold a fiction, and contrary to all credibility, Ulyſſes being a mortal, ſhe a goddeſs: Homer therefore, to ſoften the relation, brings in inſtances of the like paſſion, in Orion and Iäſion; and by this he fully juſtifies his own conduct, the poet being at liberty to make uſe of any prevailing ſtory, though it were all fable and fiction.

But why ſhould the death of Orion be here aſcribed to Diana; whereas in other places ſhe is ſaid to exerciſe her power only over women? The reaſon is, ſhe ſlew him for offering violence to her chaſtity; for though Homer be ſilent about his crime, yet Horace relates it.

——————— "Integræ
"Tentator Orion Dianæ
"Virgineâ domitus ſagittâ."

Euſtathius gives another reaſon why Aurora is ſaid to be in love with Orion. He was a great hunter, as appears from the eleventh book of the Odyſſey; and the morning, or Aurora, is moſt favourable to thoſe diverſions.

Ver. 161. *Scarce could Iäſion,* &c.] Ceres is here underſtood allegorically, to ſignify the earth; Iäſion was a great huſbandman, and conſequently Ceres may eaſily be feigned to be in love with him: the thunderbolt with which he is ſlain ſignifies the exceſs of heat, which frequently diſappoints the hopes of the labourer. *Euſtathius.*

And

And is it now my turn, ye mighty pow'rs!
Am I the envy of your bliſsful bow'rs?
A man, an outcaſt to the ſtorm and wave,
It was my crime to pity and to ſave;
When he who thunders rent his bark in twain,
And ſunk his brave companions in the main.
Alone, abandon'd, in mid ocean toſt,
The ſport of winds and driv'n from ev'ry coaſt,
Hither this man of miſeries I led,
Receiv'd the friendleſs, and the hungry fed;
Nay promis'd (vainly promis'd!) to beſtow
Immortal life, exempt from age and woe.
'Tis paſt——and Jove decrees he ſhall remove;
Gods as we are, we are but ſlaves to Jove.
Go then he may; (he muſt, if he ordain,
Try all thoſe dangers, all thoſe deeps, again)
But never, never ſhall Calypſo ſend
To toils like theſe, her huſband and her friend.

Ver. 165. *A man, an outcaſt to the ſtorm and wave,*
It was my crime to pity, and to ſave, &c.]

Homer in this ſpeech of Calypſo ſhews very naturally how paſſion miſguides the underſtanding. She views her own cauſe in the moſt advantageous, but falſe light, and thence concludes, that Jupiter offers a piece of injuſtice in commending the departure of Ulyſſes: ſhe tells Mercury, that it is ſhe who had preſerved his life, who had entertained him with affection, and offered him immortality; and would Jupiter thus repay her tenderneſs to Ulyſſes? Would Jupiter force him from a place where nothing was wanting to his happineſs, and expoſe him again to the like dangers from which ſhe had preſerved him? This was an act of cruelty. But on the contrary, ſhe ſpeaks not one word concerning the truth of the cauſe, viz. that ſhe offered violence to the inclinations of Ulyſſes; that ſhe made him miſerable by detaining him, not only from his wife, but from his whole dominions; and never conſiders that Jupiter is juſt in delivering him from his captivity. This is a very lively, though unhappy picture of human nature, which is too apt to fall into error, and then endeavours to juſtify an error by a ſeeming reaſon. *Dacier.*

What

What ſhips have I, what ſailors to convey,
What oars to cut the long laborious way?
Yet, I'll direct the ſafeſt means to go:
That laſt advice is all I can beſtow.

To her, the pow'r who bears the charming rod.
Diſmiſs the man, nor irritate the god;
Prevent the rage of him who reigns above,
For what ſo dreadful as the wrath of Jove?
Thus having ſaid, he cut the cleaving ſky,
And in a moment vaniſh'd from her eye.
The nymph, obedient to divine command,
To ſeek Ulyſſes, pace'd along the ſand.
Him penſive on the lonely beach ſhe found,
With ſtreaming eyes in briny torrents drown'd,
And inly pining for his native ſhore;
For now the ſoft enchantreſs pleas'd no more:
For now, reluctant, and conſtrain'd by charms,
Abſent he lay in her deſiring arms,
In ſlumber wore the heavy night away,
On rocks and ſhores conſum'd the tedious day;

There

Ver. 198. *Abſent he lay in her deſiring arms.*] This paſſage has fallen under the ſevere cenſure of the critics; they condemn it as an act of conjugal infidelity, and a breach of morality in Ulyſſes: it would be ſufficient to anſwer, that a poet is not obliged to draw a perfect character in the perſon of his hero: perfection is not to be found in human life, and conſequently ought not to be aſcribed to it in poetry: neither Achilles nor Æneas are perfect characters: Æneas, in particular, is as guilty, with reſpect to Dido, in the deſertion of her, (for Virgil tells us they were married, "con-"nubio jungam ſtabili)," as Ulyſſes can be imagined by the moſt ſevere critic, with reſpect to Calypſo.

But thoſe who have blamed this paſſage, form their judgements from the morality of theſe ages, and not from the theology of the ancients: polygamy was then allowed, and even concubinage, without being eſteemed any breach of conjugal fidelity: if this be not admitted, the heathen gods are as guilty as the heathen heroes, and Jupiter and Ulyſſes are equally criminals.

This

There ſat all deſolate, and ſigh'd alone
With echoing ſorrows made the mountains groan,
And roll'd his eyes o'er all the reſtleſs main,
'Till dimm'd with riſing grief, they ſtream'd again.
Here, on the muſing mood the goddeſs preſt,
Approaching ſoft; and thus the chief addreſt.
Unhappy man! to waſting woes a prey,
No more in ſorrows languiſh life away:
Free as the winds I give thee now to rove——
Go fell the timber of yon' lofty grove,
And form a raft, and build the riſing ſhip,
Sublime to bear thee o'er the gloomy deep,
To ſtore the veſſel let the care be mine,
With water from the rock, and roſy wine,
And life-ſuſtaining bread, and fair array,
And proſp'rous gales to wait thee on the way.
Theſe if the gods with my deſires comply,
(The gods alas more mighty far than I,
And better ſkill'd in dark events to come)
In peace ſhall land thee at thy native home.
With ſighs, Ulyſſes heard the words ſhe ſpoke,
Then thus his melancholy ſilence broke.

Some

This very paſſage ſhews the ſincere affection which Ulyſſes retained for his wife Penelope; even a goddeſs cannot perſuade him to forget her; his perſon is in the power of Calypſo, but his heart is with Penelope. Tully had this book of Homer in his thought, when he ſaid of Ulyſſes, "Vetulam ſuam prætulit immortali-"tati."

Ver. 222. *Then thus his melancholy ſilence broke.*] It may be aſked what occaſions this conduct in Ulyſſes? He has been long deſirous to return to his country, why then his melancholy at the propoſal of it? This proceeds from his apprehenſions of inſincerity in Calypſo: he had long been unable to obtain his diſmiſſion with the moſt urgent entreaties: this voluntary kindneſs therefore ſeems ſuſpicious. He is ignorant that Jupiter had commanded his departure, and therefore fears leſt his obſtinate deſire of leaving her ſhould have provoked her to deſtroy him, under a ſhew of complying

Some other motive, goddeſs! ſways thy mind,
(Some cloſe deſign, or turn of womankind)
Nor my return the end, nor this the way,
On a ſlight raft to paſs the ſwelling ſea
Huge, horrid, vaſt! where ſcarce in ſafety ſails
The beſt built ſhip, tho' Jove inſpire the gales.
The bold propoſal how ſhall I fulfil;
Dark as I am, unconſcious of thy will?
Swear then, thou mean'ſt not what my ſoul forebodes;
Swear by the ſolemn oath that binds the gods.
Him, while he ſpoke, with ſmiles Calypſo ey'd,
And gently graſp'd his hand, and thus reply'd.
This ſhews thee, friend, by old experience taught,
And learn'd in all the wiles of human thought.
How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wiſe?
But hear oh earth, and hear ye ſacred ſkies!
And thou, oh Styx! whoſe formidable floods
Glide thro' the ſhades, and bind th' atteſting gods!
No form'd deſign, no meditated end
Lurks in the counſel of thy faithful friend;
Kind the perſuaſion, and ſincere my aim;
The ſame my practice, were my fate the ſame.
Heav'n has not curſt me with a heart of ſteel,
But giv'n the ſenſe to pity, and to feel.
Thus having ſaid, the goddeſs march'd before:
He trod her footſteps in the ſandy ſhore.
At the cool cave arriv'd they took their ſtate;
He fill'd the throne where Mercury had ſat.

plying with his inclinations. This is an inſtance that Ulyſſes is not only wiſe in extricating himſelf from difficulties, but cautious in guarding againſt dangers.

Ver. 238. *But hear, oh earth, and hear, ye ſacred ſkies!*] The oath of Calypſo is introduced with the utmoſt ſolemnity. Rapin allows it to be an inſtance of true ſublimity. The ancients atteſted all nature in their oaths, that all nature might conſpire to puniſh their perjuries.

For

For him, the nymph a rich repaſt ordains,
Such as the mortal life of man ſuſtains;
Before herſelf were place'd the cates divine,
Ambroſial banquet, and celeſtial wine.
Their hunger ſatiate, and their thirſt repreſt,
Thus ſpoke Calypſo to her god-like gueſt.
Ulyſſes! (with a ſigh ſhe thus began)
O ſprung from gods! in wiſdom more than man.
Is then thy home the paſſion of thy heart?
Thus wilt thou leave me, are we thus to part?
Farewell! and ever joyful may'ſt thou be,
Nor break the tranſport with one thought of me.
But ah, Ulyſſes! wert thou giv'n to know
What fate yet dooms thee, yet, to undergo;
Thy heart might ſettle in this ſcene of eaſe,
And ev'n theſe ſlighted charms might learn to pleaſe.
A willing goddeſs and immortal life,
Might baniſh from thy mind an abſent wife.

Ver. 251. *For him, the nymph a rich repaſt ordains.*] The paſſion of love is no where deſcribed in all Homer, but in this paſſage between Calypſo and Ulyſſes; and we find that the poet is not unſucceſsful in drawing the tender, as well as the fiercer paſſions. This ſeemingly trifling circumſtance is an inſtance of it; love delights to oblige, and the leaſt offices receive a value from the perſon who performs: this is the reaſon why Calypſo ſerves Ulyſſes with her own hands: her damſels attend her, but love makes it a pleaſure to her to attend Ulyſſes.

Ver. 263. *But ah Ulyſſes! wert thou giv'n to know*
What fate yet dooms thee, ———]

This is another inſtance of the tyranny of the paſſion of love; Calypſo had received a command to diſmiſs Ulyſſes; Mercury had laid before her the fatal conſequences of her refuſal, and ſhe had promiſed to ſend him away; but her love once again prevails over her reaſon; ſhe frames excuſes ſtill to detain him, and though ſhe dares not keep him, ſhe knows not how to part with him. This is a true picture of nature; love this moment reſolves, the next breaks theſe reſolutions: ſhe had promiſed to obey Jupiter, in not detaining Ulyſſes; but ſhe endeavours to perſuade Ulyſſes not to go away.

Am I inferiour to a mortal dame?
Leſs ſoft my feature, leſs auguſt my frame?
Or ſhall the daughters of mankind compare
Their earth-born beauties with the heav'nly fair?
  Alas! for this (the prudent man replies)
Againſt Ulyſſes ſhall thy anger riſe?
Lov'd and ador'd, oh goddeſs as thou art,
Forgive the weakneſs of a human heart.
Tho' well I ſee thy graces far above
The dear, tho' mortal, object of my love,
Of youth eternal well the diff'rence know,
And the ſhort date of fading charms below;
Yet ev'ry day, while abſent thus I roam,
I languiſh to return, and die at home.
Whate'er the gods ſhall deſtine me to bear
In the black ocean, or the wat'ry war,
'Tis mine to maſter with a conſtant mind;
Enur'd to perils, to the worſt reſign'd.
By ſeas, by wars, ſo many dangers run;
Still I can ſuffer: their high will be done!
  Thus while he ſpoke, the beamy ſun deſcends,
And riſing night her friendly ſhade extends.
To the cloſe grot the lonely pair remove,
And ſlept delighted with the gifts of love.
When roſy morning call'd them from their reſt,
Ulyſſes rob'd him in the cloak and veſt.
The nymph's fair head a veil tranſparent grace'd
Her ſwelling loins a radiant zone embrace'd

Ver. 277. *Tho' well I ſee thy graces far above*
The dear, tho' mortal, object of my love.]

Ulyſſes ſhews great addreſs in this anſwer to Calypſo; he firſt ſoftens the ſeverity of it, by firſt aſking a favourable acceptance of what he is about to ſay; he calls her his adored goddeſs, and places Penelope in every degree below the perfections of Calypſo. As it is the nature of women not to endure a rival, Ulyſſes aſſigns the deſire of his return to another cauſe than the love of Penelope, and aſcribes it ſolely to the love he bears his country. *Euſtathius.*

With flow'rs of gold: an under robe, unbound,
In ſnowy waves flow'd glitt'ring on the ground.
Forth iſſuing thus, ſhe gave him firſt to wield
A weighty ax, with trueſt temper ſteel'd,
And double edg'd; the handle ſmooth and plain,
Wrought of the clouded olive's eaſy grain;
And next, a wedge to drive with ſweepy ſway:
Then to the neighbouring foreſt led the way.
On the lone iſland's utmoſt verge there ſtood
Of poplars, pines, and firs, a lofty wood,
Whoſe leafleſs ſummits to the ſkies aſpire,
Scorch'd by the ſun, or ſear'd by heav'nly fire:
(Already dry'd). Theſe pointing out to view,
The nymph juſt ſhew'd him, and with tears withdrew.
Now toils the hero; trees on trees o'erthrown
Fall crackling round him, and the foreſt groan:
Sudden,

Ver. 311, &c. *Ulyſſes builds his ſhip.*] This paſſage has fallen under cenſure, as outraging all probability: Rapin believes it to be impoſſible for one man alone to build ſo compleat a veſſel in the compaſs of four days; and perhaps the ſame opinion might lead Boſſu into a miſtake, who allows twenty days to Ulyſſes in building it; he applies the word εἴκοσι, or twenty, to the days, which ought to be applied to the trees; δένδρεα is underſtood, for the poet immediately after declares that the whole was completed in the ſpace of four days; neither is there any thing incredible in the deſcription. I have obſerved already that this veſſel is but Σχεδία, a float, or raft; it is true, Ulyſſes cuts down twenty trees to build it; this may ſeem too great a proviſion of materials for ſo ſmall an undertaking: but why ſhould we imagine theſe to be large trees? The deſcription plainly ſhews the contrary, for it had been impoſſible to have felled twenty large trees in the ſpace of four days, much more to have built a veſſel proportionable to ſuch materials: but the veſſel was but ſmall, and conſequently ſuch were the trees. Homer calls theſe "dry trees;" this is not inſerted without reaſon, for green wood is unfit for navigation.

Homer in this paſſage ſhews his ſkill in mechanics; a ſhipwright could not have deſcribed a veſſel more exactly; but what is chiefly

Sudden, full twenty on the plain are ſtrow'd,
And lopp'd, and lighten'd of their branchy load.
At equal angles theſe diſpos'd to join,
He ſmooth'd and ſquar'd 'em, by the rule and line.
(The wimbles for the work Calypſo found)
With thoſe he pierce'd 'em, and with clinchers bound.
Long and capacious as a ſhipwright forms
Some bark's broad bottom to out-ride the ſtorms,
So large he built the raft: then ribb'd it ſtrong
From ſpace to ſpace, and nail'd the planks along;
Theſe form'd the ſides: the deck he faſhion'd laſt;
Then o'er the veſſel rais'd the taper maſt,
With croſſing ſail-yards dancing in the wind;
And to the helm the guiding rudder join'd.
(With yielding oſiers fence'd, to break the force
Of ſurging waves, and ſteer the ſteady courſe)
Thy loom, Calypſo! for the future ſails
Supply'd the cloth, capacious of the gales.
With ſtays and cordage laſt he rigg'd the ſhip,
And, roll'd on levers, lanch'd her in the deep.
Four days were paſt, and now the work compleat,
Shone the fifth morn: when from her ſacred ſeat

chiefly valuable is the inſight it gives us to what degree this art of ſhip-building was then arrived: we find likewiſe what uſe navigators made of aſtronomy in thoſe ages; ſo that this paſſage deſerves a double regard, as a fine piece of poetry, and a valuable remain of antiquity.

Ver. 317. *(The wimbles for the work Calypſo found.)* And
Ver. 329. *Thy loom, Calypſo! for the future ſails*
Supply'd the cloth.]

It is remarkable that Calypſo brings the tools to Ulyſſes at ſeveral times: this is another inſtance of the nature of love; it ſeeks opportunities to be in the company of the beloved perſon. Calypſo is an inſtance of it: ſhe frequently goes away, and frequently returns: ſhe delays the time, by not bringing all the implements at once to Ulyſſes; ſo that though ſhe cannot divert him from the reſolutions of leaving her, yet ſhe protracts his ſtay,

The nymph diſmiſt him, (od'rous garments giv'n)
And bath'd in fragrant oils that breath'd of heav'n:
Then fill'd two goat ſkins with her hands divine,
With water one, and one with ſable wine:
Of ev'ry kind, proviſions heav'd aboard;
And the full decks with copious viands ſtor'd.
The goddeſs, laſt, a gentle breeze ſupplies,
To curl old ocean, and to warm the ſkies.
And now rejoicing in the proſp'rous gales,
With beating heart Ulyſſes ſpreads his ſails;
Place'd at the helm he ſat, and mark'd the ſkies,
Nor clos'd in ſleep his ever-watchful eyes.
There view'd the Pleiads, and the northern team,
And great Orion's more refulgent beam,
To which, around the axle of the ſky
The bear revolving, points his golden eye:
Who ſhines exalted on th' ætherial plain,
Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main.
Far on the left thoſe radiant fires to keep
The nymph directed, as he ſail'd the deep.
Full ſev'nteen nights he cut the foamy way;
The diſtant land appear'd the following day:

Then

Ver. 344. ——— *Ulyſſes ſpreads his ſails.*] It is obſervable that the poet paſſes over the parting of Calypſo and Ulyſſes in ſilence; he leaves it to be imagined by the reader, and proſecutes his main action. Nothing but a cold compliment could have proceeded from Ulyſſes, he being overjoyed at the proſpect of returning to his country: it was therefore judicious in Homer to omit the relation; and not draw Calypſo in tears, and Ulyſſes in a tranſport of joy. Beſides, it was neceſſary to ſhorten the epiſode: the commands of Jupiter were immediately to be obeyed; and the ſtory being now turned to Ulyſſes, it was requiſite to put him immediately upon action, and deſcribe him endeavouring to re-eſtabliſh his own affairs, which is the whole deſign of the Odyſſey.

Ver. 355. *Full ſev'nteen nights he cut the foamy way.*] It may ſeem incredible that one perſon ſhould be able to manage a veſſel ſeven-

teen

Then ſwell'd to ſight Phæacia's duſky coaſt,
And woody mountains, half in vapours loſt:
That lay before him, indiſtinct and vaſt,
Like a broad ſhield amid the wat'ry waſte.
But him, thus voyaging the deeps below,
From far, on Solymé's aerial brow,
The king of ocean ſaw, and ſeeing burn'd,
(From Æthiopia's happy climes return'd),
The raging monarch ſhook his azure head,
And thus in ſecret to his ſoul he ſaid.
Heav'ns! how uncertain are the pow'rs on high?
Is then revers'd the ſentence of the ſky,
In one man's favour; while a diſtant gueſt
I ſhar'd ſecure the Æthiopian feaſt?
Behold how near Phæacia's land he draws!
The fate, affix'd by fate's eternal laws

teen days without any aſſiſtance; but Euſtathius vindicates Homer by an inſtance that very much reſembles this of Ulyſſes. A certain Pamphylian being taken priſoner, and carried to Tamiathis (afterwards Damietta) in Ægypt, continued there ſeveral years; but being continually deſirous to return to his country, he pretends a ſkill in ſea-affairs: this ſucceeds, and he is immediately employed in maritime buſineſs, and permitted the liberty to follow it according to his own inclination, without any inſpection. He made uſe of this opportunity, and, furniſhing himſelf with a ſail, and proviſions for a long voyage, committed himſelf to the ſea all alone; he croſſed that vaſt extent of waters that lies between Ægypt and Pamphylia, and arrived ſafely in his own country: in memory of this prodigious event he changed his name, and was called Μονοναύτης, or the Sole ſailor; and the family was not extinct in the days of Euſtathius.

It may not be improper to obſerve, that this deſcription of Ulyſſes ſailing alone, is a demonſtration of the ſmallneſs of his veſſel; for it is impoſſible that a large one could be managed by a ſingle perſon. It is indeed ſaid that twenty trees were taken down for the veſſel, but this does not imply that all the trees were made uſe of, but only ſo much of them as was neceſſary to his purpoſe.

To end his toils. Is then our anger vain?
No; if this ſceptre yet commands the main.
He ſpoke, and high the forky trident hurl'd,
Rolls clouds on clouds, and ſtirs the wat'ry world,
At once the face of earth and ſea deforms,
Swells all the winds, and rouſes all the ſtorms,
Down ruſh'd the night: eaſt, weſt, together roar;
And ſouth, and north, roll mountains to the ſhore;
Then ſhook the hero, to deſpair reſign'd,
And queſtion'd thus his yet unconquer'd mind.
Wretch that I am! what farther fates attend
This life of toils, and what my deſtin'd end?
Too well alas! the iſland goddeſs knew,
On the black ſea what perils ſhou'd enſue.
New horrours now this deſtin'd head encloſe;
Unfill'd is yet the meaſure of my woes;
With what a cloud the brows of heav'n are crown'd?
What raging winds? what roaring waters round?
'Tis Jove himſelf the ſwelling tempeſt rears;
Death, preſent death, on ev'ry ſide appears.
Happy! thrice happy! who, in battle ſlain,
Preſt, in Atrides' cauſe, the Trojan plain:
Oh!

Ver. 393. *Happy! thrice happy! who, in battle ſlain,*
Preſt, in Atrides' cauſe, the Trojan plain.]

Plutarch in his Sympoſiacs relates a memorable ſtory concerning Memmius, the Roman general: when he had ſacked the city Corinth, and made ſlaves of thoſe who ſurvived the ruin of it, he commanded one of the youths of a liberal education to write down ſome ſentence in his preſence, according to his own inclinations. The youth immediately wrote this paſſage from Homer.

Happy! thrice happy! who, in battle ſlain,
Preſt, in Atrides' cauſe, the Trojan plain.

Memmius immediately burſt into tears, and gave the youth and all his relations their liberty.

Virgil has tranſlated this paſſage in the firſt book of his Æneis. The ſtorm and the behaviour of Æneas are copied exactly from it. The ſtorm, in both the poets, is deſcribed conciſely, but the images

Oh! had I dy'd before that well-fought wall;
Had ſome diſtinguiſh'd day renown'd my fall;
(Such as was that, when ſhow'rs of jav'lins fled
From conqu'ring Troy around Achilles dead)
All Greece had paid me ſolemn fun'rals then,
And ſpread my glory with the ſons of men.
A ſhameful fate now hides my hapleſs head,
Un-wept, un-noted, and for ever dead!
A mighty wave ruſh'd o'er him as he ſpoke,
The raft it cover'd, and the maſt it broke;
Swept from the deck, and from the rudder torn,
Far on the ſwelling ſurge the chief was borne:
While by the howling tempeſt rent in twain
Flew ſail and ſail-yards rattling o'er the main.

ges are full of terrour; Homer leads the way, and Virgil treads in his ſteps without any deviation. Ulyſſes falls into lamentation, ſo does Æneas: Ulyſſes wiſhes he had found a nobler death, ſo does Æneas: this diſcovers a bravery of ſpirit; they lament not that they are to die, but only the inglorious manner of it. This fully anſwers an objection that has been made both againſt Homer and Virgil, who have been blamed for deſcribing their heroes with ſuch an air of mean-ſpiritedneſs. Drowning was eſteemed by the ancients an accurſed death, as it deprived their bodies of the rites of ſepulture; it is therefore no wonder that this kind of death was great y dreaded, ſince it barred their entrance into the happy regions of the dead for many hundreds of years.

Ver. 397. *(Such as was that, when ſhow'rs of jav'lins fled From conqu'ring Troy around Achilles dead).*]

Theſe words have relation to an action, no where deſcribed in the Iliad or Odyſſey. When Achilles was ſlain by the treachery of Paris, the Trojans made a ſally to gain his body, but Ulyſſes carried it off upon his ſhoulders, while Ajax protected him with his ſhield. The war of Troy is not the ſubject of the Odyſſey, and therefore relates not the death of Achilles; but, as Longinus remarks, he inſerts many actions in the Odyſſey, which are the ſequel of the ſtory of the Iliad. This conduct has a very happy effect; he aggrandizes the character of Ulyſſes by thoſe ſhort hiſtories, and has found out the way to make him praiſe himſelf, without vanity.

Long

Long preſs'd, he heav'd beneath the weighty wave,
Clogg'd by the cumbrous veſt Calypſo gave:
At length emerging, from his noſtrils wide
And guſhing mouth, effus'd the briny tide,
Ev'n then not mindleſs of his laſt retreat,
He ſeiz'd the raft, and leapt into his ſeat,
Strong with the fear of death. The rolling flood
Now here, now there, impell'd the floating wood.
As when a heap of gather'd thorns is caſt
Now to, now fro, before th' autumnal blaſt;
Together clung, it rolls around the field;
So roll'd the float, and ſo its texture held:
And now the ſouth, and now the north, bear ſway,
And now the eaſt the foamy floods obey,
And now the weſt wind whirls it o'er the ſea.
The wand'ring chief, with toils on toils oppreſt,
Leucothea ſaw, and pity touch'd her breaſt:
(Herſelf a mortal once, of Cadmus' ſtrain,
But now an azure ſiſter of the main)
Swift as a ſea-mew ſpringing from the flood,
All radiant on the raft the goddeſs ſtood:

Ver. 424. *The wond'ring chief, with toils on toils oppreſt,*
Leucothea ſaw, and pity touch'd her breaſt.]

It is not probable that Ulyſſes could eſcape ſo great a danger by his own ſtrength alone; and therefore the poet introduces Leucothea to aſſiſt in his preſervation. But it may be aſked, if this is not contradictory to the command of Jupiter in the beginning of the book? Ulyſſes is there forbid all aſſiſtance either from men or gods, whence then is it that Leucothea preſerves him? The former paſſage is to be underſtood to imply an interdiction only of all aſſiſtance, until Ulyſſes was ſhipwrecked; he was to ſuffer, not to die: thus Pallas afterwards calms the ſtorm; ſhe may be imagined to have a power over the winds, as ſhe is the daughter of Jupiter, who denotes the air, according to the obſervation of Euſtathius: here Leucothea is very properly introduced to preſerve Ulyſſes; ſhe is a ſea-goddeſs, and had been a mortal, and therefore intereſts herſelf in the cauſe of a mortal.

Then

Then thus addreſt him. Thou, whom heav'n decrees
To Neptune's wrath, ſtern tyrant of the ſeas,
(Unequal conteſt); not his rage and pow'r,
Great as he is, ſuch virtue ſhall devour.
What I ſuggeſt thy wiſdom will perform!
Forſake thy float, and leave it to the ſtorm;
Strip off thy garments; Neptune's fury brave
With naked ſtrength, and plunge into the wave.
To reach Phæacia all thy nerves extend,
There fate decrees thy miſeries ſhall end.
This heav'nly ſcarf beneath thy boſom bind,
And live; give all thy terrours to the wind.
Soon as thy arms the happy ſhore ſhall gain,
Return the gift, and caſt it in the main;
Obſerve my orders, and with heed obey,
Caſt it far off, and turn thy eyes away.
With that, her hand the ſacred veil beſtows,
Then down the deeps ſhe div'd from whence ſhe roſe;
A moment ſnatch'd the ſhining form away,
And all was cover'd with the curling ſea.
Struck with amaze, yet ſtill to doubt inclin'd,
He ſtands ſuſpended, and explores his mind.
What ſhall I do? Unhappy me! who knows
But other gods intend me other woes?
Whoe'er thou art, I ſhall not blindly join
Thy pleaded reaſon, but conſult with mine:
For

Ver. 454. ——— *I ſhall not blindly join*
Thy pleaded reaſon ———]

Euſtathius obſerves, that this paſſage is a leſſon to inſtruct us, that ſecond reflections are preferable to our firſt thoughts; and the poet maintains the character of Ulyſſes by deſcribing him thus doubtful and cautious. But is not Ulyſſes too incredulous, who will not believe a goddeſs? and diſobedient to her, by not committing himſelf to the ſeas? Leucothea does not confine Ulyſſes to an immediate compliance with her injunctions: ſhe commands him to forſake the raft, but leaves the time to his own diſcretion: and

Ulyſſes

For ſcarce in ken appears that diſtant iſle
Thy voice foretells me ſhall conclude my toil.
Thus then I judge; while yet the planks ſuſtain
The wild waves fury, here I fix'd remain:
But when their texture to the tempeſt yields,
I launch advent'rous on the liquid fields,
Join to the help of gods the ſtrength of man,
And take this method, ſince the beſt I can.
While thus his thoughts an anxious council hold,
The raging god a wat'ry mountain roll'd;
Like a black ſheet the whelming billow ſpread,
Burſt o'er the float, and thunder'd on his head.
Planks, beams, diſ-parted fly: the ſcatter'd wood
Rolls diverſe, and in fragments ſtrows the flood.
So the rude Boreas, o'er the field new-ſhorn,
Toſſes and drives the ſcatter'd heaps of corn.
And now a ſingle beam the chief beſtrides;
There, pois'd a-while above the bounding tides,
His limbs diſ-cumbers of the clinging veſt,
And binds the ſacred cincture round his breaſt:
Then prone on ocean in a moment flung,
Stretch'd wide his eager arms, and ſhot the ſeas along.
All naked now, on heaving billows laid,
Stern Neptune ey'd him, and contemptuous ſaid:
Go, learn'd in woes, and other woes aſſay!
Go, wander helpleſs on the wat'ry way:

Ulyſſes might very juſtly be ſomewhat incredulous, when he knew that Neptune was his enemy, and contriving his deſtruction. The doubts therefore of Ulyſſes are the doubts of a wiſe man: but then, is not Ulyſſes deſcribed with a greater degree of prudence, than the goddeſs? She commands him to leave the raft, he chuſes to make uſe of it till he arrives nearer the ſhores. Euſtathius directly aſcribes more wiſdom to Ulyſſes than to Leucothea. This may appear too partial; it is ſufficient to obſerve, that the command of Leucothea was general, and left the manner of it to his own prudence.

Thus,

Thus, thus find out the deſtin'd ſhore, and then
(If Jove ordains it), mix with happier men.
Whate'er thy fate, the ills our wrath could raiſe
Shall laſt remember'd in thy beſt of days.
This ſaid, his ſea-green ſteeds divide the foam,
And reach high Ægæ and the tow'ry dome.
Now, ſcarce withdrawn the fierce earth-ſhaking pow'r,
Jove's daughter Pallas watch'd the fav'ring hour,
Back to their caves ſhe bade the winds to fly,
And huſh'd the bluſt'ring brethren of the ſky.
The drier blaſts alone of Boreas ſway,
And bear him ſoft on broken waves away;
With gentle force impelling to that ſhore,
Where fate has deſtin'd he ſhall toil no more.
And now two nights, and now two days were paſt,
Since wide he wander'd on the wat'ry waſte;
Heav'd on the ſurge with intermitting breath,
And hourly panting in the arms of death.
The third fair morn now blaz'd upon the main;
Then glaſſy ſmooth lay all the liquid plain,
The winds were huſh'd, the billows ſcarcely curl'd,
And a dead ſilence ſtill'd the wat'ry world.
When lifted on a ridgy wave, he ſpies
The land at diſtance, and with ſharpen'd eyes.

Ver. 496. *And now two nights, and now two days are paſt.*] It may be thought incredible, that any perſon ſhould be able to contend ſo long with a violent ſtorm, and at laſt ſurvive it: it is allowed that this could ſcarce be done by the natural ſtrength of Ulyſſes; but the poet has ſoftened the narration, by aſcribing his preſervation to the cincture of Leu othea. The poet likewiſe very judiciouſly removes Neptune, that Ulyſſes may not appear to be preſerved againſt the power of that god; and, to reconcile it entirely to credibility, he introduces Pallas, who calms the winds and compoſes the waves, to make way for his preſervation.

As pious children joy with vaſt delight
When a lov'd ſire revives before their ſight,
(Who ling'ring long has call'd on death in vain,
Fixt by ſome dæmon to the bed of pain,
Till heav'n by miracle his life reſtore);
So joys Ulyſſes at th' appearing ſhore;
And ſees (and labours onward as he ſees),
The riſing foreſts, and the tufted trees.
And now, as near approaching as the ſound
Of human voice the liſt'ning ear may wound,
Amidſt the rocks he hears a hollow roar
Of murm'ring ſurges breaking on the ſhore:
Nor peaceful port was there, nor winding bay,
To ſhield the veſſel from the rolling ſea,
But cliffs, and ſhaggy ſhores, a dreadful ſight!
All-rough with rock, with foamy billows white.
Fear ſeiz'd his ſlacken'd limbs and beating heart;
As thus he commun'd with his ſoul apart.
Ah me! when o'er a length of waters toſt,
Theſe eyes at laſt behold th' unhop'd-for coaſt,
No

Ver. 506. *As pious children joy with vaſt delight.*] This is a very beautiful compariſon, and well adapted to the occaſion. We miſtake the intention of it, as Euſtathius obſerves, if we imagine that Homer intended to compare the perſon of Ulyſſes to theſe children: it is introduced ſolely to expreſs the joy which he conceives at the ſight of land: if we look upon it in any other view, the reſemblance is loſt; for the children ſuffer not themſelves, but Ulyſſes is in the utmoſt diſtreſs. Theſe images drawn from common life are particularly affecting; they have relation to every man, as every man may poſſibly be in ſuch circumſtances: other images may be more noble, and yet leſs pleaſing: they may raiſe our admiration, but theſe engage our affections.

Ver. 524. *Ah me! when o'er a length of waters toſt.*] Ulyſſes in this place calls as it were a council in his own breaſt; conſiders his danger, and how to free himſelf from it. But it may be aſked if it be probable that he ſhould have leiſure for ſuch a conſultation, in the time of ſuch imminent danger? The anſwer is, that nothing

No port receives me from the angry main,
But the loud deeps demand me back again.
Above ſharp rocks forbid acceſs; around
Roar the wild waves; beneath, is ſea profound!
No footing ſure affords the faithleſs ſand,
To ſtem too rapid, and too deep to ſtand.
If here I enter, my efforts are vain,
Daſh'd on the cliffs, or heav'd into the main;
Or round the iſland if my courſe I bend,
Where the ports open, or the ſhores deſcend,
Back to the ſeas the rolling ſurge may ſweep,
And bury all my hopes beneath the deep.
Or ſome enormous whale the god may ſend,
(For many ſuch on Amphitrite attend)
Too well the turns of mortal chance I know,
And hate relentleſs of my heav'nly foe.
While thus he thought, a monſt'rous wave up-bore
The chief, and daſh'd him on the craggy ſhore:
Torn was his ſkin, nor had the ribs been whole,
But inſtant Pallas enter'd in his ſoul.
Cloſe to the cliff with both his hands he clung,
And ſtuck adherent, and ſuſpended hung;
'Till the huge ſurge roll'd off: then, backward ſweep
The refluent tides, and plunge him in the deep.
As when the Polypus, from forth his cave
Torn with full force, reluctant beats the wave;

His

thing could be more happily imagined, to exalt his character: he is drawn with a great preſence of mind, in the moſt deſperate circumſtances: fear does not prevail over his reaſon: his wiſdom dictates the means of his preſervation; and his bravery of ſpirit ſupports him in the accompliſhment of it.

The poet is alſo very judicious in the management of the ſpeech: it is conciſe, and therefore proper to the occaſion, there being no leiſure for prolixity; every image is drawn from the ſituation of the place, and his preſent condition; he follows nature, and nature is the foundation of true poetry.

Ver. 550. *As when the Polypus.*] It is very ſurpriſing to ſee the

His ragged claws are ſtuck with ſtones and ſands:
So the rough rock had ſhagg'd Ulyſſes' hands.
And now had periſh'd, whelm'd beneath the main,
Th' unhappy man; ev'n fate had been in vain:
But all ſubduing Pallas lent her pow'r,
And prudence ſav'd him in the needful hour.
Beyond the beating ſurge his courſe he bore,
(A wider circle, but in ſight of ſhore)
With longing eyes, obſerving, to ſurvey
Some ſmooth aſcent, or ſafe-ſequeſter'd bay.
Between the parting rocks at length he ſpy'd
A falling ſtream with gentler waters glide;

prodigious variety with which Homer enlivens his poetry: he riſes or falls as his ſubjects lead him, and finds alluſions proper to repreſent an hero in battle, or a perſon in calamity. We have here an inſtance of it; he compares Ulyſſes to a Polypus; the ſimilitude is ſuited to the element, and to the condition of the perſon. It is obſervable, that this is the only full deſcription of a perſon ſhipwrecked in all his poems: he therefore gives a looſe to his imagination, and enlarges upon it very copiouſly. There appears a ſurpriſing fertility of invention through the whole of it: in what a variety of attitudes is Ulyſſes drawn, during the ſtorm, and at his eſcape from it? His ſoliloquies in the turns of his condition, while he is ſometimes almoſt out of danger, and then again involved in new difficulties, engage our hopes and fears. He ennobles the whole by his machinery, and Neptune, Pallas, and Leucothea, intereſt themſelves in his ſafety or deſtruction. He has likewiſe choſen the moſt proper occaſion for a copious deſcription; there is leiſure for it. The propoſition of the poem requires him to deſcribe a man of ſufferings in the perſon of Ulyſſes: he therefore no ſooner introduces him, but he throws him into the utmoſt calamities, and deſcribes them largely, to ſhew at once the greatneſs of his diſtreſs, and his wiſdom and patience under it. In what are the ſufferings of Æneas in Virgil comparable to theſe of Ulyſſes, Æneas ſuffers little perſonally in compariſon of Ulyſſes; his incidents have leſs variety, and conſequently leſs beauty. Homer draws his images from nature, but embelliſhes thoſe images with the utmoſt art, and fruitfulneſs of invention.

Where

Where to the ſeas the ſhelving ſhore declin'd,
And form'd a bay, impervious to the wind.
To this calm port the glad Ulyſſes preſt,
And hail'd the river, and its god addreſt.
Whoe'er thou art, before whoſe ſtream unknown
I bend, a ſuppliant at thy wat'ry throne,
Hear, azure king! nor let me fly in vain
To thee from Neptune and the raging main.
Heav'n hears and pities hapleſs men like me,
For ſacred ev'n to gods is miſery:
Let then thy waters give the weary reſt,
And ſave a ſuppliant, and a man diſtreſt.
He pray'd, and ſtraight the gentle ſtream ſubſides,
Detains the ruſhing current of his tides,
Before the wand'rer ſmooths the wat'ry way,
And ſoft receives him from the rolling ſea.
That moment, fainting as he touch'd the ſhore,
He dropt his ſinewy arms: his knees no more
Perform'd their office, or his weight upheld:
His ſwol'n heart heav'd; his bloated body ſwell'd:
From mouth and noſe the briny torrent ran;
And loſt in laſſitude lay all the man,

Ver. 581, *He drops his ſinewy arms: his knees no more*
Perform'd their office.]

Euſtathius appears to me to give this paſſage a very forced interpretation; he imagines that the poet, by ſaying that Ulyſſes bent his knees and arms, ſpoke philoſophically, and intended to expreſs that he contracted his limbs, that had been fatigued with the long extenſion in ſwimming, by a voluntary remiſſion; leſt they ſhould grow ſtiff, and loſe their natural faculty. But this is an impoſſibility: how could this be done, when he is ſpeechleſs, fainting, without pulſe and reſpiration? Undoubtedly Homer, as Dacier obſerves, means by the expreſſion of ἔκαμψε γούνατα καὶ χεῖρας, no more than that his limbs failed him, or he fainted. If the action was voluntary, it implies that he intended to refreſh them, for γόνυ κάμπτειν is generally uſed in that ſenſe by Homer; if involuntary, it ſignifies he fainted.

Depriv'd of voice, of motion, and of breath;
The ſoul ſcarce waking in the arms of death.
Soon as warm life its wonted office found,
The mindful chief Leucothea's ſcarf unbound;
Obſervant of her word, he turn'd aſide
His head, and caſt it on the rolling tide.
Behind him far, upon the purple waves
The waters waft it, and the nymph receives.
Now parting from the ſtream, Ulyſſes found
A moſſy bank with pliant ruſhes crown'd;
The bank he preſs'd, and gently kiſs'd the ground;
Where on the flow'ry herb as ſoft he lay,
Thus to his ſoul the ſage began to ſay.
What will ye next ordain, ye pow'rs on high!
And yet, ah yet, what fates are we to try?
Here by the ſtream, if I the night out-wear,
Thus ſpent already, how ſhall nature bear
The dews deſcending, and nocturnal air;
Or chilly vapours, breathing from the flood
When morning riſes?—If I take the wood,
And in thick ſhelter of innum'rous boughs
Enjoy the comfort gentle ſleep allows;
Tho' fence'd from cold, and tho' my toil be paſt,
What ſavage beaſt may wander in the waſte?
Perhaps I yet may fall a bloody prey
To prowling bears, or lions in the way.
Thus long debating in himſelf he ſtood:
At length he took the paſſage to the wood,
Whoſe ſhady horrours on the riſing brow
Wav'd high, and frown'd upon the ſtream below.
There grew two olives, cloſeſt of the grove,
With roots entwin'd, and branches interwove;
Alike their leaves, but not alike they ſmil'd
With ſiſter-fruits; one fertile, one was wild.
Nor here the ſun's meridian rays had pow'r
Nor wind ſharp piercing, nor the ruſhing ſhow'r;

The

The verdant arch ſo cloſe its texture kept:
Beneath this covert, great Ulyſſes crept.
Of gather'd leaves an ample bed he made,
(Thick ſtrown by tempeſt thro' the bow'ry ſhade)
Where three at leaſt might winter's cold defy,
Tho' Boreas rage'd along th' inclement ſky.
This ſtore, with joy the patient hero found,
And ſunk amidſt 'em, heap'd the leaves around.
As ſome poor peaſant fated to reſide
Remote from neighbours in a foreſt wide,
Studious to ſave what human wants require,
In embers heap'd, preſerves the ſeeds of fire:
Hid in dry foliage thus Ulyſſes lies,
'Till Pallas pour'd ſoft ſlumbers on his eyes;
And golden dreams (the gift of ſweet repoſe)
Lull'd all his cares, and baniſh'd all his woes.

Ver. 630. *As ſome poor peaſant, fated to reſide*
Remote from neighbours———]

Homer is very happy in giving dignity to low images. What can be more unpromiſing than this compariſon, and what more ſucceſsfully executed? Ulyſſes, in whom remains as it were but a ſpark of life, the vital heat being extinguiſhed by the ſhipwreck, is very juſtly compared to a brand, that retains only ſome ſmall remains of fire; the leaves that cover Ulyſſes, are repreſented by the embers, and the preſervation of the fire all night, paints the revival of his ſpirits by the repoſe of the night; the expreſſion,

———Fated to reſide
Remote from neighbours———

is not added in vain; it gives, as Euſtathius further obſerves, an air of credibility to the alluſion, as if it had really been drawn from ſome particular obſervation; a perſon that lives in a deſart being obliged to ſuch circumſtantial cares, where it is impoſſible to have a ſupply, for want of neighbours.

The concluſion.] This book begins with the ſeventh day, and comprehends the ſpace of twenty-five days; the firſt of which is taken up in the meſſage of Mercury, and interview between Calypſo and Ulyſſes; the four following in the building of the veſſel; eighteen before the ſtorm, and two after it. So that one and thirty days are completed, ſince the opening of the poem.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK VI.

THE ARGUMENT.

Pallas appearing in a dream to Nauſicaa (the daughter of Alcinous king of Phæacia) commands her to deſcend to the river, and waſh the robes of ſtate, in preparation to her nuptials. Nauſicaa goes with her handmaids to the river; where, while the garments are ſpread on the bank, they divert themſelves in ſports. Their voices awake Ulyſſes, who addreſſing himſelf to the princeſs, is by her relieved and clothed, and receives directions in what manner to apply to the king and queen of the iſland.

WHILE thus the weary wand'rer ſunk to reſt,
And peaceful ſlumbers calm'd his anxious breaſt;
The martial maid from heav'n's ærial height
Swift to Phæacia wing'd her rapid flight.
In elder times the ſoft Phæacian train
In eaſe poſſeſt the wide Hyperian plain;
'Till the Cyclopean race in arms aroſe,
A lawleſs nation of gigantic foes:
Then great Nauſithous, from Hyperia far,
Thro' ſeas retreating from the ſound of war,
The recreant nation to fair Scheria led,
Where never ſcience rear'd her laurel'd head:
There,

Ver. 12. *Where never ſcience rear'd her laurel'd head.*] The Phæacians having a great ſhare in the ſucceeding parts of the Odyſſey, it

There, round his tribes a ſtrength of wall he rais'd;
To heav'n the glitt'ring domes and temples blaz'd:
Juſt to his realms, he parted grounds from grounds,
And ſhar'd the lands, and gave the lands their bounds.
Now in the ſilent grave the monarch lay,
And wiſe Alcinous held the regal ſway.
To his high palace thro' the fields of air
The goddeſs ſhot; Ulyſſes was her care.
There as the night in ſilence roll'd away,
A heav'n of charms divine Nauſicaa lay:

it may not be improper to enlarge upon their character. Homer has here deſcribed them very diſtinctly: he is to make uſe of the Phæacians to convey Ulyſſes to his country; he therefore, by this ſhort character, gives the reader ſuch an image of them, that he is not ſurpriſed at their credulity and ſimplicity, in believing all thoſe fabulous recitals which Ulyſſes makes in the progreſs of the poem. The place likewiſe in which he deſcribes them is well choſen; it is before they enter upon action, and by this method we know what to expect from them, and ſee how every action is naturally ſuited to their character.

Boſſu obſerves that the poet has inſerted this verſe with great judgement: Ulyſſes, ſays he, knew that the Phæacians were ſimple and credulous; and that they had all the qualities of a lazy people, who admire nothing ſo much as romantic adventures: he therefore pleaſes them by recitals ſuited to their own humour: but even here the poet is not unmindful of his more underſtanding readers; and the truth intended to be taught by way of moral is, that a ſoft and effeminate life breaks the ſpirit, and renders it incapable of manly ſentiments or actions.

This Phæacia of the ancients is the iſland now called Corfu. The inhabitants of it were a colony of the Hyperians: Euſtathius remarks, that it has been a queſtion whether Hyperia were a city or an iſland; he judges it to be a city: it was infeſted by the Cyclops; but they had no ſhipping, as appears from the ninth of the Odyſſey, and conſequently if it had been an iſland, they could not have moleſted the Phæacians; he therefore concludes it to be a city, afterwards called Camarina in Sicily.

Mr. Barnes has here added a verſe that is not to be found in any other edition; and I have rendered it in the tranſlation.

Thro'

Thro' the thick gloom the ſhining portals blaze;
Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a grace.
Light as the viewleſs air, the warriour-maid
Glides thro' the valves, and hovers round her head;
A fav'rite virgin's blooming form ſhe took,
From Dymas ſprung, and thus the viſion ſpoke:
Oh indolent! to waſte thy hours away!
And ſleep'ſt thou careleſs of the bridal day?
Thy ſpouſal ornament neglected lies;
Ariſe, prepare the bridal train, ariſe!

A juſt

Ver. 24. *Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a grace.*] The poet, as Euſtathius obſerves, celebrates the beauty of theſe two attending virgins to raiſe their characters, that they may not be eſteemed common ſervants, or the poet thought extravagant, when he compares Nauſicaa and her damſels to Diana and her nymphs.

The judgement with which he introduces the viſion is remarkable: in the Iliad, when he is to give an air of importance to his viſion, he clothes it in the likeneſs of Neſtor, the wiſeſt perſon of the army; a man of leſs conſideration had been unſuitable to the greatneſs of the occaſion, which was to perſuade kings and heroes. Here the poet ſends a viſion to a young lady, under the reſemblance of a young lady: he adapts the circumſtances to the perſon, and deſcribes the whole with an agreeable propriety. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 31. *The ſpouſal ornament neglected lies;*
Ariſe, prepare the bridal train——]

Here is a remarkable cuſtom of antiquity. Euſtathius obſerves, that it was uſual for the bride to give changes of dreſs to the friends of the bridegroom at the celebration of the marriage, and Homer directly affirms it. Dacier quotes a paſſage in Judges concerning Sampſon's giving changes of garments at his marriage-feaſt, as an inſtance of the like cuſtom amongſt the Iſraelites; but I believe, if there was ſuch a cuſtom at all amongſt them, it is not evident from the paſſage alledged: nothing is plainer, than that Sampſon had not given the garments, if his riddle had not been expounded: nay, inſtead of giving, he himſelf had received them, if it had not been interpreted. I am rather of opinion, that what is ſaid of Sampſon, has relation to another cuſtom amongſt the ancients, of propoſing an ænigma at feſtivals, and adjudging a reward to him that ſolved it. Theſe the Greeks called γρίφους Συμποτικούς;

" griphos

A juſt applauſe the cares of dreſs impart,
And give ſoft tranſport to a parent's heart.
Haſte, to the limpid ſtream direct thy way,
When the gay morn unveils her ſmiling ray:
Haſte to the ſtream! companion of thy care,
Lo, I thy ſteps attend, thy labours ſhare.

Virgin

" griphos convivales;" Athenæus has a long diſſertation about this practice in his tenth book, and gives a number of inſtances of the ænigmatical propoſitions in uſe at Athens, and of the forfeitures and rewards upon the ſolution, and non-ſolution of them; and Euſtathius in the tenth book of the Odyſſey comes into the ſame opinion. So that if it was a cuſtom amongſt the Iſraelites as well as Greeks, to give garments (as it appears to be to give other gifts) this paſſage is no inſtance of it: it is indeed a proof that the Hebrews as well as Greeks had a cuſtom of entertaining themſelves at their feſtivals, with theſe " griphi convivales: I therefore believe that theſe changes of garments were no more than rewards or forfeits, according to the ſucceſs of the interpretation.

Ver. 35. *Haſte, to the limpid ſtream.*] This paſſage has not eſcaped the raillery of the critics; Homer, ſay they, brings the goddeſs of wiſdom down from heaven, only to adviſe Nauſicaa to make haſte to waſh her cloaths againſt her wedding: what neceſſity is there for a conduct ſo extraordinary upon ſo trivial an occaſion? Euſtathius ſufficiently anſwers the objection, by obſerving that the poet very naturally brings about the ſafety of Ulyſſes by it; the action of the waſhing is the means, the protection of Ulyſſes the end of the deſcent of that goddeſs; ſo that ſhe is not introduced lightly, or without contributing to an important action: and it muſt be allowed, that the means made uſe of are very natural; they grow out of the occaſion, and at once give the fable a poetical turn, and an air of probability.

It has been further objected, that the poet gives an unworthy employment to Nauſicaa, the daughter of a king; but ſuch critics form their idea of ancient from modern greatneſs: it would be now a meanneſs to deſcribe a perſon of quality thus employed, becauſe cuſtom has made it the work of perſons of low condition: it would now be thought diſhonourable for a lady of high ſtation to attend the flocks; yet we find in the moſt ancient hiſtory extant,

that

Virgin awake! the marriage hour is nigh,
See! from their thrones thy kindred monarchs ſigh!
The royal car at early dawn obtain,
And order mules obedient to the rein;
For rough the way, and diſtant rolls the wave,
Where their fair veſts Phæacian virgins lave.
In pomp ride forth; for pomp becomes the great,
And majeſty derives a grace from ſtate.
Then to the palaces of heav'n ſhe ſails,
Incumbent on the wings of wafting gales:
The ſeat of gods; the regions mild of peace,
Full joy, and calm eternity of eaſe.
There no rude winds preſume to ſhake the ſkies,
No rains deſcend, no ſnowy vapours riſe;
But on immortal thrones the bleſt repoſe:
The firmament with living ſplendours glows.
Hither the goddeſs wing'd the aerial way,
Thro' heav'n's eternal gates that blaz'd with day.
Now from her roſy car Aurora ſhed
The dawn, and all the orient flam'd with red.
Uproſe the virgin with the morning light,
Obedient to the viſion of the night.
The queen ſhe ſought: the queen her hours beſtow'd
In curious works; the whirling ſpindle glow'd

that the daughters of Laban and Jethro, perſons of power and diſtinction, were ſo employed, without any diſhonour to their quality. In ſhort, theſe paſſages are to be looked upon as exact pictures of the old world, and conſequently as valuable remains of antiquity.

Ver. 61. ——— *The queen her hours beſtow'd*
In curious works ———]

This is another image of ancient life: we ſee a queen amidſt her attendants at work at the dawn of day: "de nocte ſurrexit, et digiti ejus apprehenderant fuſum." This is a practice as contrary to the manners of our ages, as the other of waſhing the robes: it is the more remarkable in this queen, becauſe ſhe lived amongſt an idle effeminate people, that loved nothing but pleaſures. *Dacier.*

With

With crimſon threads, while buſy damſels cull
The ſnowy fleece, or twiſt the purpled wool.
Meanwhile Phæacia's peers in council ſat;
From his high doom the king deſcends in ſtate,
Then with a filial awe the royal maid
Approach'd him paſſing, and ſubmiſſive ſaid;
Will my dread ſire his ear regardful deign,
And may his child the royal car obtain?
Say, with thy garments ſhall I bend my way,
Where thro' the vales the mazy waters ſtray?
A dignity of dreſs adorns the great,
And kings draw luſtre from the robe of ſtate.
Five ſons thou haſt; three wait the bridal day,
And ſpotleſs robes become the young and gay:
So when with praiſe amid the dance they ſhine,
By theſe my cares adorn'd, that praiſe is mine.
Thus ſhe: but bluſhes ill reſtrain'd betray
Her thoughts intentive on the bridal day:
The conſcious ſire the dawning bluſh ſurvey'd,
And ſmiling thus beſpoke the blooming maid.
My child, my darling joy, the car receive;
That, and whate'er our daughter aſks, we give.
Swift at the royal nod th' attending train.
The car prepare, the mules inceſſant rein.
The blooming virgin with diſpatchful cares
Tunics, and ſtoles, and robes imperial bears.

Ver. 88. *Tunics, and ſtoles, and robes imperial bears.*] It is not without reaſon that the poet deſcribes Nauſicaa carrying the whole wardrobe of the family to the river: he inſerts theſe circumſtances ſo particularly, that ſhe may be able to clothe Ulyſſes in the ſequel of the ſtory: he further obſerves the modeſty and ſimplicity of thoſe early times, when the whole dreſs of a king and his family (who reigned over a people that delighted in dreſs) is without gold: for we ſee Nauſicaa carries with her all the habits that were uſed at the greateſt ſolemnities; which had they been wrought with gold could not have been waſhed. *Euſtathius.*

The

The queen, aſſiduous, to her train aſſigns
The ſumptuous viands, and the flav'rous wines.
The train prepare a cruiſe of curious mould,
A cruiſe of fragrance, form'd of burniſh'd gold;
Odour divine! whoſe ſoft refreſhing ſtreams
Sleek the ſmooth ſkin, and ſcent the ſnowy limbs.
Now mounting the gay ſeat, the ſilken reins
Shine in her hand: along the ſounding plains
Swift fly the mules: nor rode the nymph alone;
Around, a bevy of bright damſels ſhone.
They ſeek the ciſterns where Phæacian dames
Waſh their fair garments in the limpid ſtreams;
Where gathering into depth from falling rills,
The lucid wave a ſpacious baſon fills.
The mules unharneſs'd range beſide the main,
Or crop the verdant herbage of the plain.
Then emulous the royal robes they lave,
And plunge the veſtures in the cleanſing wave;

Ver. 95. *Now mounting the gay ſeat*, &c.] This image of Nauſicaa riding in her car to the river, has exerciſed the pencils of excellent painters. Pauſanias in his fifth book, which is the firſt of the Eliacs, ſpeaks of a picture of two virgins drawn by mules, of which the one guides the reins, the other has her head covered with a veil: it is believed that it repreſents Nauſicaa, the daughter of Alcinous, going with one of her virgins to the river. The words of Pauſanias have cauſed ſome doubt with relation to the picture; he ſays, ἐπὶ ἡμιόνων, or "upon mules," but Homer deſcribes her upon a car; how then can Nauſicaa be intended by the painter? but Romulus Amaſæus, who comments upon Pauſanias, ſolves the difficulty, by obſerving that ἐπὶ ἡμιόνων does not ſignify upon mules, but a car drawn by mules, by a figure frequent in all authors. Pliny is alſo thus to be underſtood in his thirty fifth book; Protogenes the Rhodian painter at Athens, Paralus, and likewiſe Hemionida, who is ſaid to repreſent Nauſicaa; Hemionida is uſed (as Hermolaus Barbarus obſerves upon that paſſage), as a term of art to expreſs a virgin riding upon, or more properly drawn by mules, or ἐπὶ ἡμιόνων. *Spondanus.*

(The veſtures cleans'd o'erſpread the ſhelly ſand,
Their ſnowy luſtre whitens all the ſtrand:)
Then with a ſhort repaſt relieve their toil,
And o'er their limbs diffuſe ambroſial oil;
And while the robes imbibe the ſolar ray,
O'er the green mead the ſporting virgins play:
(Their ſhining veils unbound) Along the ſkies
Toſt, and retoſt, the ball inceſſant flies.
They ſport, they feaſt; Nauſicaa liſts her voice,
And warbling ſweet, makes earth and heav'n rejoice.
As when o'er Erymanth Diana roves,
Or wide Taygetus reſounding groves;
A ſilvan train the huntreſs queen ſurrounds,
Her rattling quiver from her ſhoulder ſounds:
Fierce in the ſport, along the mountain's brow
They bay the boar, or chaſe the bounding roe:
High o'er the lawn, with more majeſtic pace,
Above the nymphs ſhe treads with ſtately grace;
Diſtinguiſh'd excellence the goddeſs proves;
Exults Latona, as the virgin moves.
With equal grace Nauſicaa trod the plain,
And ſhone tranſcendent o'er beauteous train.
Meantime (the care and fav'rite of the ſkies)
Wrapt in embow'ring ſhade, Ulyſſes lies,
His woes forgot! but Pallas now addreſt
To break the bands of all compoſing reſt.
Forth from her ſnowy hand Nauſicaa threw
The various ball; the ball erroneous flew,

And

Ver. 133. *Forth from her ſnowy hand Nauſicaa threw*
The various ball———]

This play with the ball was called φαιννίς, and ἐφετίνδα, by the ancients; and from the ſignification of the word, which is deception, we may learn the nature of the play: the ball was thrown to ſome one of the players unexpectedly, and he as unexpectedly threw it to ſome other of the company to catch, from which ſurpriſe upon

And ſwam the ſtream: loud ſhrieks the virgin train,
And the loud ſhriek redoubles from the main.
Wak'd by the ſhrilling ſound, Ulyſſes roſe,
And to the deaf woods wailing, breath'd his woes.
Ah me! on what inhoſpitable coaſt,
On what new region is Ulyſſes toſt:
Poſſeſt by wild barbarians fierce in arms;
Or men, whoſe boſom tender pity warms?
What ſounds are theſe that gather from the ſhores:
The voice of nymphs that haunt the ſilvan bow'rs,
The fair-hair'd Dryads of the ſhady wood;
Or azure daughters of the ſilver flood;
Or human voice? but, iſſuing from the ſhades,
Why ceaſe I ſtraight to learn what ſound invades?
Then, where the grove with leaves umbrageous bends;
With forceful ſtrength a branch the hero rends;
Around his loins the verdant cinctur ſpreads
A wreathy foliage and concealing ſhades.

As

one another it took the name of φαινίς. It was a ſport much in uſe among the ancients, both men and women; it cauſed a variety of motions in throwing and running, and was therefore a very healthful exerciſe. The Lacedæmonians were remarkable for the uſe of it; Alexander the Great frequently exerciſed at it; and Sophocles wrote a play, called Πλυντρίαις, or Lotrices; in which he repreſented Nauſicaa ſporting with her damſels at this play: it is not now extant.

Ver. 151. *Around his loins the verdant cinctur ſpreads*
A wreathy foliage and concealing ſhades.]

This paſſage has given great offence to the critics. The interview between Ulyſſes and Nauſicaa, ſays Rapin, outrages all the rules of decency: ſhe forgets her modeſty, and betrays her virtue, by giving too long an audience: ſhe yields too much to his complaints, and indulges her curioſity too far at the ſight of a perſon in ſuch circumſtances. But perhaps Rapin is too ſevere; Homer has guarded every circumſtance with as much caution as if he had been aware of the objection: he covers his loins with a broad foliage,

(for

As when a lion in the midnight hours,
Beat by rude blaſts and wet with wint'ry ſhow'rs,
Deſcends terrific from the mountain's brow:
With living flames his rolling eye-balls glow;
With

(for Euſtathius obſerves, that πτόρθος ſignifies κλάδος πλατύς, or "a broad branch,") he makes Ulyſſes ſpeak at a proper diſtance, and introduces Minerva to encourage her virgin modeſty. Is there here any outrage of decency? Beſides, what takes off his objection of immodeſty in Nauſicaa, is, that the ſight of a naked man was not unuſual in thoſe ages; it was cuſtomary for virgins of the higheſt quality to attend heroes to the bath, and even to aſſiſt in bathing them, without any breach of modeſty; as is evident from the conduct of Polycaſte in the concluſion of the third book of the Odyſſey, who bathes and perfumes Telemachus. If this be true, the other objections of Rapin about her yielding too much to his complaints, &c. are of no weight; but ſo many teſtimonies of her virtuous and compaſſionate diſpoſition, which induces her to pity and relieve calamity. Yet it may ſeem that the other damſels had a different opinion of this interview, and that through modeſty they ran away, while Nauſicaa alone talks with Ulyſſes: but this only ſhews, not that ſhe had leſs modeſty, but more prudence, than her retinue. The damſels fled not out of modeſty, but fear of an enemy: whereas Nauſicaa wiſely reflects, that no ſuch perſon could arrive there, the country being an iſland; and from his appearance, ſhe rightly concluded him to be a man in calamity. This wiſdom is the Pallas in the allegory, which makes her to ſtay when the other damſels fly for want of equal reflection. Adam and Eve covered themſelves after the ſame manner as Ulyſſes.

Ver. 153. *As when a lion in the midnight hours.*] This is a very noble compariſon, yet has not eſcaped cenſure: it has been objected that it is improper for the occaſion, as bearing images of too much terror, only to fright a few timorous virgins, and that the poet is unſeaſonably ſublime. This is only true in burleſque poetry, where the moſt noble images are frequently aſſembled to diſgrace the ſubject, and to ſhew a ridiculous diſproportion between the alluſion and the principal ſubject; but the ſame reaſon will not hold in epic poetry, where the poet raiſes a low circumſtance into dignity by a ſublime compariſon. The ſimile is not introduced mere-

With conſcious ſtrength elate, he bends his way
Majeſtically fierce, to ſeize his prey;
(The ſteer or ſtag:) or with keen hunger bold
Springs o'er the fence, and diſſipates the fold.
No leſs a terrour from the neighb'ring groves
(Rough from the toſſing ſurge) Ulyſſes moves;
Urge'd on by want, and recent from the ſtorms;
The brackiſh ooze his manly grace deforms.
Wide o'er the ſhore with many a piercing cry
To rocks, to caves, the frighted virgins fly:
All but the nymph: the nymph ſtood fix'd alone,
By Pallas arm'd with boldneſs not her own.
Meantime in dubious thought the king awaits,
And ſelf-conſidering, as he ſtands, debates;
Diſtant his mournful ſtory to declare,
Or proſtrate at her knee addreſs the pray'r.
But fearful to offend, by wiſdom ſway'd,
At awful diſtance he accoſts the maid.
If from the ſkies a goddeſs, or if earth
(Imperial virgin) boaſt thy glorious birth,
To thee I bend! if in that bright diſguiſe
Thou viſit earth, a daughter of the ſkies,
Hail, Dian, hail! the huntreſs of the groves
So ſhines majeſtic, and ſo ſtately moves,

So

ly to ſhew the impreſſion it made upon the virgins, but paints Ulyſſes himſelf in very ſtrong colours: Ulyſſes is fatigued with the tempeſts and waves; the lion with winds and ſtorms: it is hunger that drives the lion upon his prey; an equal neceſſity compels Ulyſſes to go down to the virgins: the lion is deſcribed in all his terrors, Ulyſſes arms himſelf as going upon an unknown adventure; ſo that the compariſon is very noble and very proper.

Ver. 175. *If from the ſkies a goddeſs, or if earth,*
(Imperial virgin) boaſt thy glorious birth,
To thee I bend!]

There never was a more agreeable and inſinuating piece of flattery, than this addreſs of Ulyſſes; and yet nothing mean appears in it, as

So breathes an air divine! But if thy race
Be mortal, and this earth thy native place,
Bleſt is the father from whoſe loins you ſprung,
Bleſt is the mother at whoſe breaſt you hung,
Bleſt are the brethren who thy blood divide,
To ſuch a miracle of charms allay'd:
Joyful they ſee applauding princes gaze,
When ſtately in the dance you ſwim th' harmonious maze.
But bleſt o'er all, the youth with heav'nly charms,
Who claſps the bright perfection in his arms!
Never, I never view'd 'till this bleſt hour
Such finiſh'd grace! I gaze and I adore!
Thus ſeems the palm with ſtately honours crown'd
By Phœbus' altars; thus o'erlooks the ground;

The

as is uſual in almoſt all flattery. The only part that ſeems liable to any imputation, is that exaggeration at the beginning, of calling her a goddeſs; yet this is propoſed with modeſty and doubt, and hypothetically. Euſtathius aſſigns two reaſons why he reſembles her to Diana, rather than to any other deity; either becauſe he found her and her damſels in a ſolitary place, ſuch as Diana is ſuppoſed to frequent with her rural nymphs; or perhaps Ulyſſes might have ſeen ſome ſtatue or picture of that goddeſs, to which Nauſicaa bore a likeneſs.

Ver. 193. *Thus ſeems the palm.*] This alluſion is introduced to image the ſtatelineſs and exactneſs of ſhape in Nauſicaa, to the mind of the reader; and ſo Tully, as Spondanus obſerves, underſtands it. Cicero, 1. de legibus. "Aut quod Homericus Ulyſſes "Deli ſe proceram et teneram palmam vidiſſe dixit, hodie mon-"ſtrant eandem." Pliny alſo mentions this palm, lib. xiv. cap. 44. "Necnon palma Deli ab ejuſdem Dei ætate conſpicitur." The ſtory of the palm is this: "When Latona was in travail of "Apollo in Delos, the earth that inſtant produced a large palm, "againſt which ſhe reſted in her labour." Homer mentions it in his Hymns.

Κεκλιμένη———
Ἀγχοτάτω φοίνικος.

The pride of Delos. (By the Delian coaſt,
I voyage'd, leader of a warriour-hoſt,
But ah how change'd! from thence my ſorrow flows;
O fatal voyage, ſource of all my woes!)
Raptur'd.

And alſo Callimachus.

Λύσατο δὲ ζωνὴν, ἀπὸ δ' ἐκλίθη ἔμπαλιν ὤμοις
Φοίνικος ποτὶ πρέμνον. And again,

——— ἐπένευσεν ὅ Δήλιος αὐδὴ τὶ φοίνιξ
Ἐξάπινης.

This alluſion is after the oriental manner. Thus in the Pſalms, how frequently are perſons compared to cedars? And in the ſame author, children are reſembled to olive-branches.

This palm was much celebrated by the ancients; the ſuperſtition of the age had given it a religious veneration, and even in the times of Tully the natives eſteemed it immortal; (for ſo the above-mentioned words imply). This gives weight and beauty to the addreſs of Ulyſſes; and it could not but be very acceptable to a young lady, to hear herſelf compared to the greateſt wonder in the creation.

Dionyſius Halicarnaſſus obſerves the particular beauty of theſe two verſes.

Δήλῳ δὴ ποθὲν τοῖον Ἀπόλλωνος παρὰ βωμῷ,
Φοίνικος νέον ἔρνος ἀνερχόμενον ἐνόησα.

When Homer, ſays he, would paint an elegance of beauty, or repreſent any agreeable object, he makes uſe of the ſmootheſt vowels and moſt flowing ſemivowels, as in the lines laſt recited: he rejects harſh ſounds, and a colliſion of rough words; but the lines flow along with a ſmooth harmony of letters and ſyllables, without any offence to the ear by aſperity of ſound.

Ver. 198. *O fatal voyage, ſource of all my woes!*] There is ſome obſcurity in this paſſage: Ulyſſes ſpeaks in general, and does not ſpecify what voyage he means. It may therefore be aſked how is it to be underſtood? Euſtathius anſwers, that the voyage of the Greeks to the Trojan expedition is intended by the poet; for Lycophron writes, that the Greeks ſailed by Delos in their paſſage to Troy.

Homer

Raptur'd I ſtood, and as this hour amaz'd,
With rev'rence at the lofty wonder gaz'd:
Raptur'd I ſtand, for earth ne'er knew to bear
A plant ſo ſtately, or a nymph ſo fair.
Aw'd from acceſs, I lift my ſuppliant hands;
For miſery, oh queen, before thee ſtands!
Twice ten tempeſtuous nights I roll'd, reſign'd
To roaring billows, and the warring wind;
Heav'n bade the deep to ſpare! but heav'n, my foe,
Spares only to inflict ſome mightier woe!
Inur'd to cares, to death in all its forms;
Outcaſt I rove, familiar with the ſtorms!
Once more I view the face of human kind:
Oh let ſoft pity touch thy gen'rous mind!
Unconſcious of what air I breathe, I ſtand
Naked, defenceleſs on a foreign land.
Propitious to my wants, a veſt ſupply
To guard the wretched from th' inclement ſky:
So may the gods who heav'n and earth controul,
Crown the chaſte wiſhes of thy virtuous ſoul,
On thy ſoft hours their choiceſt bleſſings ſhed;
Bleſt with a huſband be thy bridal bed;
Bleſt be thy huſband with a blooming race,
And laſting union crown your bliſsful days.
The gods, when they ſupremely bleſs, beſtow
Firm union on their favourites below;
Then envy grieves, with inly-pining hate;
The good exult, and heav'n is in our ſtate.

Homer paſſes over the voyage in this tranſient manner without a further explanation: Ulyſſes had no leiſure to enlarge upon that ſtory, but reſerves it more advantageouſly for a future diſcovery before Alcinous and the Phæacian rulers. By this conduct he avoids a repetition, which muſt have been tedious to the reader, who would have found little appetite afterwards, if he had already been ſatisfied by a full diſcovery made to Nauſicaa. The obſcurity therefore ariſes from choice, not want of judgement.

To

To whom the nymph: O ſtranger ceaſe thy care,
Wiſe is thy ſoul, but man is born to bear:
Jove weighs affairs of earth in dubious ſcales,
And the good ſuffers, while the bad prevails:
Bear, with a ſoul reſign'd, the will of Jove;
Who breathes, muſt mourn: they woes are from above.
But ſince thou tread'ſt our hoſpitable ſhore,
'Tis mine to bid the wretched grieve no more,
To clothe the naked, and thy way to guide—
Know, the Phæacian tribes this land divide;
From great Alcinous' royal loins I ſpring,
A happy nation, and an happy king.

Ver. 229. *Jove weighs affairs of earth in dubious ſcales,*
And the good ſuffers, while the bad prevails.]

The morality of this paſſage is excellent, and very well adapted to the preſent occaſion. Ulyſſes had ſaid,

> Heav'n bade the deep to ſpare! but heav'n, my foe,
> Spares only to inflict ſome mightier woe.

Nauſicaa makes uſe of this expreſſion to pay her addreſs to Ulyſſes, and at the ſame time teaches conformable to truth, that the afflicted are not always the objects of divine hate; the gods (adds ſhe) beſtow good and evil indifferently, and therefore we muſt not judge of men from their conditions, for good men are frequently wretched, and bad men happy. Nay ſometimes affliction diſtinguiſhes a man of goodneſs, when he bears it with a greatneſs of ſpirit. Sophocles puts a very beautiful expreſſion into the mouth of Oedipus, *κάλλος κακῶν*, the "beauty and ornament of calamities. *Euſtathius.*

Longinus is of opinion, that when great poets and writers ſink in their vigour, and cannot reach the pathetic, they deſcend to the moral. Hence he judges the Odyſſey to be the work of Homer's declining years, and gives that as a reaſon of its morality: he ſpeaks not this out of derogation to Homer, for he compares him to the ſun, which though it has not the ſame warmth as when in the meridian, is always of the ſame bigneſs: this is no diſhonour to the Odyſſey; the moſt uſeful, if not the moſt beautiful circumſtance is allowed it, I mean Inſtruction: in the Odyſſey Homer appears to be the better man, in the Iliad the better poet.

Then

Then to her maids—Why, why, ye coward train,
Theſe fears, this flight? ye fear, and fly in vain.
Dread ye a foe? diſmiſs that idle dread,
'Tis death with hoſtile ſtep theſe ſhores to tread:
Safe in the love of heav'n, an ocean flows
Around our realm, a barrier from the foes;
'Tis ours this ſon of ſorrow to relieve,
Chear the ſad heart, nor let affliction grieve.
By Jove the ſtranger and the poor are ſent,
And what to thoſe we give, to Jove is lent.
Then food ſupply, and bathe his fainting limbs
Where waving ſhades obſcure the mazy ſtreams.

Ver. 242. *'Tis death with hoſtile ſtep theſe ſhores to tread.*] This I take to be the meaning of the word δίεργος, which Euſtathius explains by ζῶν καὶ ἐῤῥωμένος, "vivus et valens;" or, "he ſhall not "be long lived." But it may be aſked how this character of valour in deſtroying their enemies can agree with the Phæacians, an effeminate, unwarlike nation? Euſtathius anſwers, that the protection of the gods is the beſt defence, and upon this Nauſicaa relies. But then it is neceſſary that man ſhould co operate with the gods; for it is in vain to rely upon the gods for ſafety, if we ourſelves make not uſe of means proper for it: whereas the Phæacians were a people wholly given up to luxury and pleaſures. The true reaſon then of Nauſicaa's praiſe of the Phæacians may perhaps be drawn from that honourable partiality, and innate love which every perſon feels for his country. She knew no people greater than the Phæacians, and having ever lived in full ſecurity from enemies, ſhe concludes that it is not in the power of enemies to diſturb that ſecurity.

Ver. 247. *By Jove the ſtranger and the poor are ſent,*
And what to thoſe we give, to Jove is lent.]

This is a very remarkable paſſage, full of ſuch a pious generoſity as the wiſeſt teach, and the beſt practiſe. I am ſenſible it may be underſtood two ways; and in both, it bears an excellent inſtruction. The words are, "the poor and ſtranger are from Jove, and a ſmall "gift is acceptable to them," or "acceptable to Jupiter," Διὶ φίλη. I have choſen the latter, in conformity to the eaſtern way of thinking: "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the "Lord," as it is expreſſed in the Proverbs.

Obedient

Obedient to the call, the chief they guide
To the calm current of the ſecret tide;
Cloſe by the ſtream a royal dreſs they lay,
A veſt and robe, with rich embroid'ry gay:
Then unguents in a vaſe of gold ſupply,
That breath'd a fragrance thro' the balmy ſky.
To them the king. No longer I detain
Your friendly care: retire, ye virgin train!
Retire, while from my weary'd limbs I lave
The foul pollution of the briny wave:
Ye gods! ſince this worn frame refection knew,
What ſcenes have I ſurvey'd of dreadful view?
But, nymphs, recede! ſage chaſtity denies
To raiſe the bluſh, or pain the modeſt eyes.
The nymphs withdrawn, at once into the tide
Active he bounds; the flaſhing waves divide:

O'er

Ver. 263. *But, nymphs, recede!* &c.] This place ſeems contradictory to the practice of antiquity, and other paſſages in the Odyſſey: nothing is more frequent than for heroes to make uſe of the miniſtry of damſels in bathing, as appears from Polycaſte and Telemachus, &c. Whence is it then that Ulyſſes commands the attendants of Nauſicaa to withdraw while he bathes? Spondanus is of opinion, that the poet intended to condemn an indecent cuſtom of thoſe ages ſolemnly by the mouth of ſo wiſe a perſon as Ulyſſes: but there is no other inſtance in all his works to confirm that conjecture. I am at a loſs to give a better reaſon, unleſs the difference of the places might make an alteration in the action. It is poſſible that in baths prepared for public uſe, there might be ſome convenience to defend the perſon who bathed in ſome degree from obſervation, which might be wanting in an open river, ſo that the action might be more indecent in the one inſtance than in the other, and conſequently occaſion theſe words of Ulyſſes: but this is a conjecture, and ſubmitted as ſuch to the reader's better judgement.

Ver. 265. ——— *At once into the tide*
Active he bounds ———]

It may be aſked why Ulyſſes prefers the river waters in waſhing, to the waters of the ſea, in the Odyſſey; whereas in the tenth book

of

O'er all his limbs his hands the wave diffuſe,
And from his locks compreſs the weedy ooze;
The balmy oil, a fragrant ſhow'r, he ſheds;
Then, dreſt, in pomp magnificently treads.
The warriour goddeſs gives his frame to ſhine
With majeſty enlarge'd, and air divine:
Back from his brows a length of hair unfurls,
His hyacinthine locks deſcend in wavy curls.
As by ſome artiſt to whom Vulcan gives
His ſkill divine, a breathing ſtatue lives;
By Pallas taught, he frames the wond'rous mould,
And o'er the ſilver pours the fuſil gold.
So Pallas his heroic frame improves
With heav'nly bloom, and like a god he moves.
A fragrance breathes around: majeſtic grace
Attends his ſteps: th' aſtoniſh'd virgins gaze.
Soft he reclines along the murm'ring ſeas,
Inhaling freſhneſs from the fanning breeze.
The wond'ring nymph his glorious port ſurvey'd,
And to her damſels, with amazement, ſaid.

of the Iliad, after the death of Dolon, Diomed and Ulyſſes prefer the ſea waters to thoſe of the river? There is a different reaſon for this different regimen: in the Iliad, Ulyſſes was fatigued, and and ſweated with the labours of the night, and in ſuch a caſe the ſea waters, being more rough, are more purifying and corroborating: but here Ulyſſes comes from the ſeas, and (as Plutarch in his Sympoſiacs obſerves upon this paſſage), the more ſubtle and light particles exhale by the heat of the ſun, but the rough and the ſaline ſtick to the body, till waſhed away by freſh waters.

Ver. 283. *He reclines along the murm'ring ſeas.*] This little circumſtance, Euſtathius obſerves, is not without its effect; the poet withdraws Ulyſſes, to give Nauſicaa an opportunity to ſpeak freely in his praiſe without a breach of modeſty: ſhe ſpeaks apart to her damſels, and, by this conduct, Ulyſſes neither hears his own commendation, which is a pain to all worthy ſpirits, nor does Nauſicaa betray an indecent ſenſibility, becauſe ſhe ſpeaks only to her own ſex and attendants.

Not without care divine the ſtranger treads
This land of joy: his ſteps ſome godhead leads:
Would Jove deſtroy'd him, ſure he had been driv'n
Far from this realm, the fav'rite iſle of heav'n.
Late a ſad ſpectacle of woe, he trod
The deſert ſands, and now he looks a god.
Oh heav'n! in my connubial hour decree
This man my ſpouſe, or ſuch a ſpouſe as he!
But haſte, the viands and the bowl provide—
The maids the viands, and the bowl ſupply'd:
Eager he fed, for keen his hunger rage'd,
And with the gen'rous vintage thirſt aſſwage'd.
Now on return her care Nauſicaa bends,
The robes reſumes, the glittering car aſcends,
Far blooming o'er the field: and as ſhe preſs'd
The ſplendid ſeat, the liſt'ning chief addreſs'd.

Ver. 293. *Oh heav'n! in my connubial hour decree*
This man my ſpouſe, or ſuch a ſpouſe as he!]

This paſſage has been cenſured as an outrage againſt modeſty and credibility; is it probable that a young princeſs ſhould fall in love with a ſtranger at firſt ſight? and if ſhe really falls in love, is it not an indecent paſſion? I will lay before the reader the obſervations of Plutarch upon it. "If Nauſicaa, upon caſting her eyes "upon this ſtranger, and feeling ſuch a paſſion for him as Calyp- "ſo felt, talks thus out of wantonneſs, her conduct is blamea- "ble: but if perceiving his wiſdom by his prudent addreſs, ſhe "wiſhes for ſuch an huſband, rather than a perſon of her own "country who had no better qnalifications than ſinging, dancing, "and dreſſing, ſhe is to be commended." This diſcovers no weakneſs, but prudence, and a true judgement. She deſerves to be imitated by the fair ſex, who ought to prefer a good underſtanding before a fine coat, and a man of worth before a good dancer.

Beſides, it may be offered in vindication of Nauſicaa, that ſhe had in the morning been aſſured by a viſion from heaven, that her nuptials were at hand; this might induce her to believe that Ulyſſes was the perſon intended by the viſion for her huſband; and his good ſenſe and prudent behaviour, as Dacier obſerves, might make her wiſh it, without any imputation of immodeſty.

Stranger ariſe! the ſun rolls down the day,
Lo, to the palace I direct thy way:
Where in high ſtate the nobles of the land
Attend my royal ſire, a radiant band.
But hear, tho' wiſdom in thy ſoul preſides,
Speaks from thy tongue, and ev'ry action guides;
Advance at diſtance, while I paſs the plain
Where o'er the furrows waves the golden grain:
Alone I reaſcend—With airy mounds
A ſtrength of wall the guarded city bounds:
The jutting land two ample bays divides;
Full thro' the narrow mouths deſcend the tides:
The ſpacious baſons arching rocks encloſe,
A ſure defence from ev'ry ſtorm that blows.
Cloſe to the bay great Neptune's fane adjoins;
And near, a forum flank'd with marble ſhines,
Where the bold youth, the num'rous fleets to ſtore,
Shape the broad ſail, or ſmooth the taper oar:
For not the bow they bend, nor boaſt the ſkill
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;
But the tall maſt above the veſſel rear,
Or teach the flutt'ring ſail to float in air.
They ruſh into the deep with eager joy,
Climb the ſteep ſurge, and thro' the tempeſt fly;

A

Ver. 325. *They ruſh into the deep with eager joy.*] It is very judicious in the poet to let us thus fully into the character of the Phæacians, before he comes to ſhew what relation they have to the ſtory of the Odyſſey: he deſcribes Alcinous and the people of better rank, as perſons of great hoſpitality and humanity; this gives an air of probability to the free and benevolent reception which Ulyſſes found: he deſcribes the vulgar as excellent navigators; and he does this not only becauſe they are iſlanders, but, as Euſtathius obſerves, to prepare the way for the return of Ulyſſes, who was to be reſtored by their conduct to his country, even againſt the inclination of Neptune, the god of the ocean. But it may be aſked, is not Homer inconſiſtent with himſelf, when he paints the Phæa-

A proud, unpoliſh'd race—To me belongs
The care to ſhun the blaſt of ſland'rous tongues;
Leſt malice, prone the virtuous to defame,
Thus with vile cenſure taint my ſpotleſs name.
" What ſtranger this, whom thus Nauſicaa leads?
" Heav'ns! with what graceful majeſty he treads?
" Perhaps a native of ſome diſtant ſhore,
" The future conſort of her bridal hour;

cians as men of the utmoſt humanity, and immediately after calls them a proud unpoliſhed race, and given up to cenſorioufneſs? It is eaſy to reconcile the ſeeming contradiction, by applying the character of humanity to the higher rank of the nation, and the other to the vulgar and the mariners. I believe the ſame character holds good to this day amongſt any people who are much addicted to ſea-affairs; they contract a roughneſs, by being ſecluded from the more general converſe of mankind, and conſequently are ſtrangers to that affability, which is the effect of a more enlarged converſation. But what is it that inclines the Phæacians to be cenſorious? It is to be remembered, that they are every where deſcribed as a people abandoned to idleneſs; to idleneſs therefore that part of their character is to be imputed. When the thoughts are not employed upon things, it is uſual to turn them upon perſons: a good man has not the inclination, an induſtrious man not the leiſure, to be cenſorious; ſo that cenſure is the property of idleneſs. This I take to be the moral, intended to be drawn from the character of the Phæacians.

Ver. 331. *What ſtranger this, whom thus Nauſicaa leads?*] This is an inſtance of the great art of Homer, in ſaying every thing properly. Nauſicaa had conceived a great eſteem for Ulyſſes, and ſhe had an inclination to let him know it; but modeſty forbid her to reveal it openly: how then ſhall Ulyſſes know the value ſhe has for his perſon, conſiſtently with the modeſty of Nauſicaa? Homer with great addreſs puts her compliments into the mouth of the Phæacians, and by this method ſhe ſpeaks her own ſentiments, as the ſentiments of the Phæacians: Nauſicaa, as it were, is withdrawn, and a whole nation introduced for a more general praiſe of Ulyſſes.

" Or

" Or rather, ſome deſcendent of the ſkies;
" Won by her pray'r, th' aerial bridegroom flies.
" Heav'n on that hour its choiceſt influence ſhed,
" That gave a foreign ſpouſe to crown her bed!
" All, all the god-like worthies that adorn
" This realm, ſhe flies: Phæacia is her ſcorn."
And juſt the blame: for female innocence
Not only flies the guilt, but ſhuns th' offence:
Th' unguarded virgin, as unchaſte, I blame;
And the leaſt freedom with the ſex is ſhame,

'Till

Ver. 335. *Or rather, ſome deſcendant of the ſkies.*] Euſtathius remarks, that the compliments of Nauſicaa anſwer the compliments made to her by Ulyſſes: he reſembled her to Diana, ſhe him to the gods. But it may be aſked, are not both theſe extravagancies? and is it not beyond all credibility that Nauſicaa ſhould be thought a goddeſs, or Ulyſſes a god? In theſe ages it would be judged extravagant, but it is to be remembered that in the days of Homer every grove, river, fountain, and oak-tree, were thought to have their peculiar deities; this makes ſuch relations as theſe more reconcileable, if not to truth, at leaſt to the opinions of antiquity, which is ſufficient for poetry.

Ver. 344. ——*The leaſt freedom with the ſex is ſhame,*
Till our conſenting fires a ſpouſe provide.]

This is an admirable picture of ancient female life among the orientals; the virgins were very retired, and never appeared amongſt men but upon extraordinary occaſions, and then always in the preſence of the father or mother: but when they were married, ſays Euſtathius, they had more liberty. Thus Helen converſes freely with Telemachus and Piſiſtratus, and Penelope ſometimes with the ſuitors. Nauſicaa delivers her judgement ſententiouſly, to give it more weight; what can be more modeſt than theſe expreſſions? And yet they have been greatly traduced by Monſieur Perrault, a French critic; he tranſlates the paſſage ſo as to imply that " Nau-
" ſicaa diſapproves of a virgin's lying with a man, without the
" permiſſion of her father, before marriage;" ἀνδράσι μίσγεσθαι led him into this miſtake, which is ſometimes uſed in ſuch a ſignification, but here it only means converſation; if the word μίσγεσθαι ſignified more than keeping company, it would be more ridiculous, as Boileau obſerves upon Longinus, than Perrault makes

'Till our conſenting fires a ſpouſe provide,
And public nuptials juſtify the bride.
But would'ſt thou ſoon review thy native plain?
Attend, and ſpeedy thou ſhalt paſs the main:
Nigh where a grove with verdant poplars crown'd,
To Pallas ſacred, ſhades the holy ground,
We bend our way: a bubbling fount diſtills
A lucid lake, and thence deſcends in rills;
Around the grove a mead with lively green
Falls by degrees and forms a beauteous ſcene;

it: for it is joined to ἀνδράσι, and then it would infer that Nauſicaa diſapproves of a young woman's lying with ſeveral men before ſhe was married, without the licence of her father. The paſſage, continues Boileau, is full of honour and decency: Nauſicaa has a deſign to introduce Ulyſſes to her father; ſhe tells him ſhe goes before to prepare the way for his reception, but that ſhe muſt not be ſeen to enter the city in his company, for fear of giving offence, which a modeſt woman ought not to give: a virtuous woman is obliged not only to avoid immodeſty, but the appearance of it; and for her part ſhe could not approve of a young woman keeping company with men without the permiſſion of her father or mother, before ſhe was married. Thus the indecency is not in Homer, but in the critic: it is indeed, in Homer, an excellent lecture of modeſty and morality.

Ver. 347. *But would'ſt thou ſoon review thy native plain?*] Euſtathius and Dacier are both of opinion, that Nauſicaa had conceived a paſſion for Ulyſſes: I think this paſſage is an evidence that ſhe rather admired and eſteemed, than loved him; for it is contrary to the nature of the paſſion to give directions for the departure of the perſon beloved, but rather to invent excuſes to prolong his ſtay. It is true Nauſicaa had wiſhed in the foregoing parts of this book, that ſhe might have Ulyſſes for her huſband, or ſuch an huſband as Ulyſſes: but this only ſhews that ſhe admired his accompliſhments, nor could ſhe have added "ſuch a ſpouſe as he," at all, if her affections had been engaged and fixed upon Ulyſſes only. This likewiſe takes off the objection of a too great fondneſs in Nauſicaa; for it might have appeared too great a fondneſs to have fallen in love at the firſt with an abſolute ſtranger.

Hence

Here a rich juice the royal vineyard pours;
And there the garden yields a waſte of flow'rs.
Hence lies the town, as far as to the ear
Floats a ſtrong ſhout along the waves of air.
There wait embow'r'd, while I aſcend alone
To great Alcinous on his royal throne.
  Arriv'd, advance impatient of delay,
And to the lofty palace bend thy way:
The lofty palace overlooks the town,
From ev'ry dome by pomp ſuperiour known;
A child may point the way. With earneſt gait
Seek thou the queen along the rooms of ſtate;
Her royal hand a wond'rous work deſigns,
Around a circle of bright damſels ſhines,
Part twiſt the threads, and part the wool diſpoſe,
While with the purple orb the ſpindle glows.
High on a throne, amid the Scherian pow'rs,
My royal father ſhares the genial hours;
But to the queen thy mournful tale diſcloſe;
With the prevailing eloquence of woes:
So ſhalt thou view with joy thy natal ſhore,
Tho' mountains riſe between, and oceans roar.
  She added not, but waving as ſhe wheel'd
The ſilver ſcourge, it glitter'd o'er the field:
With ſkill the virgin guides th' embroider'd rein.
Slow rolls the car before th' attending train.
Now whirling down the heav'ns, the golden day
Shot thro' the weſtern clouds a dewy ray;

Ver. 373. *But to the queen thy mournful tale diſcloſe.*] This little circumſtance, ſeemingly of ſmall importance, is not without its beauty. It is natural for a daughter to apply to the mother, rather than the father: women are likewiſe generally of a compaſſionate nature, and therefore the poet firſt intereſts the queen in the cauſe of Ulyſſes. At the ſame time he gives a pattern of conjugal affection, in the union between Arete and Alcinous.

The grove they reach, where from the ſacred ſhade
To Pallas thus the penſive hero pray'd.
Daughter of Jove! whoſe arms in thunder wield
Th' avenging bolt, and ſhake the dreadful ſhield;
Forſook by thee, in vain I ſought thy aid
When booming billows clos'd above my head:
Attend, unconquer'd maid! accord my vows,
Bid the great hear, and pitying heal my woes.
This heard Minerva, but forbore to fly
(By Neptune aw'd) apparent from the ſky:
Stern god! who rage'd with vengeance unreſtrain'd,
'Till great Ulyſſes hail'd his native land.

Ver. 391. This book takes up part of the night, and the whole thirty-ſecond day; the viſion of Nauſicaa is related in the preceding night, and Ulyſſes enters the city a little after the ſun ſets in the following evening. So that thirty-two days are completed ſince the opening of the poem.

This book in general is full of life and variety: it is true, the ſubject of it is ſimple and unadorned, but improved by the poet, and rendered entertaining and noble. The muſe of Homer is like his Minerva, with reſpect to Ulyſſes, who from an object of commiſeration improves his majeſty, and gives a grace to every feature.

THE

THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK VII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The court of Alcinous.

The Princeſs Nauſicaa returns to the city, and Ulyſſes ſoon after follows thither. He is met by Pallas in the form of a young virgin, who guides him to the palace, and directs him in what manner to addreſs the queen Arete. She then involves him in a miſt, which cauſes him to paſs inviſible. The palace and gardens of Alcinous deſcribed. Ulyſſes falling at the feet of the queen, the miſt diſperſes, the Phæacians admire, and receive him with reſpect. The queen enquiring by what means he had the garments he then wore, he relates to her and Alcinous his departure from Calypſo, and his arrival on their dominions.

The ſame day continues, and the book ends with the night.

THE patient, heav'nly man thus ſuppliant pray'd;
While the ſlow mules draw on th' imperial maid:
Thro' the proud ſtreets ſhe moves, the public gaze:
The turning wheel before the palace ſtays.

With

* This book opens with the introduction of Ulyſſes to Alcinous; every ſtep the poet takes carries on the main deſign of the poem, with a progreſs ſo natural, that each incident ſeems really to have happened, and not to be invention. Thus Nauſicaa accidentally

With ready love her brother's gath'ring round,
Receiv'd the veſtures, and the mules unbound.
She ſeeks the bridal bow'r: a matron there
The riſing fire ſupplies with buſy care,

dentally meets Ulyſſes, and introduces him to Alcinous her father, who lands him in Ithaca: it is poſſible this might be true hiſtory; the poet might build upon a real foundation, and only adorn the truth with the ornaments of poetry. It is to be wiſhed, that a faithful hiſtory of the Trojan war, and the voyages of Ulyſſes, had been tranſmitted to poſterity; it would have been the beſt comment upon the Iliad and Odyſſey. We are not to look upon the poems of Homer as mere romances, but as true ſtories, heightened and beautified by poetry: thus the Iliad is built upon a real diſſention, that happened in a real war between Greece and Troy; and the Odyſſey upon the real voyages of Ulyſſes, and the diſorders that happened through his abſence in his own country. Nay, it is not impoſſible but that many of thoſe incidents that ſeem moſt extravagant in Homer, might have an appearing truth, and be juſtified by the opinions, and miſtaken credulity of thoſe ages. What is there in all Homer more ſeemingly extravagant, than the ſtory of the race of the Cyclops, with one broad eye in their foreheads? And yet, as Sir Walter Raleigh very judiciouſly conjectures, this may be built upon a ſeeming truth: they were a people of Sicily remarkable for ſavageneſs and cruelty, and perhaps might in their wars make uſe of a head-piece or vizor, which had but one ſight in it, and this might give occaſion to ſailors who coaſted thoſe ſhores to miſtake the ſingle ſight of the vizor, for a broad eye in the forehead, eſpecially when they before looked upon them as monſters for their barbarity. I doubt not but we loſe many beauties in Homer for want of a real hiſtory, and think him extravagant, when he only complies with the opinions of former ages. I thought it neceſſary to make this obſervation, as a general vindication of Homer, eſpecially in this place, immediately before he enters upon a relation of thoſe ſtories which have been thought moſt to outrage credibility: if then we look upon the Odyſſey as all fiction, we conſider it unworthily; it ought to be read as a ſtory founded upon truth, but adorned with the embelliſhments of poetry, to convey inſtruction with pleaſure the more effectually.

Whoſe

Whoſe charms in youth her father's heart inflam'd,
Now worn with age, Eurymeduſa nam'd:
The captive dame Phæacian rovers bore,
Snatch'd from Epirus, her ſweet native ſhore,
(A grateful prize) and in her bloom beſtow'd
On good Alcinous, honour'd as a god:
Nurſe of Nauſicaa from her infant years,
And tender ſecond to a mother's cares.
Now from the ſacred thicket where he lay,
To town Ulyſſes took the winding way.
Propitious Pallas, to ſecure her care,
Around him ſpread a veil of thicken'd air;
To ſhun th' encounter of the vulgar croud,
Inſulting ſtill, inquiſitive and loud.
When near the fam'd Phæacian walls he drew,
The beauteous city opening to his view,
His ſtep a virgin met, and ſtood before:
A poliſh'd urn the ſeeming virgin bore,

Ver. 10. ——— *Eurymeduſa nam'd.*] Euſtathius remarks, that the Phæacians were people of great commerce, and that it was cuſtomary in thoſe ages to exchange ſlaves in traffic; or perhaps Eurymeduſa might be a captive, piracy then being honourable, and ſuch ſeizures of cattle or ſlaves frequent. The paſſage concerning the brothers of Nauſicaa has not eſcaped the cenſure of the critics: Homer in the original calls them "like gods," and yet in the ſame breath gives them the employment of ſlaves; they unyoke the mules, and carry into the palace the burdens they brought. A two-fold anſwer may be given to this objection, and this conduct might proceed from the general cuſtom of the age, which made ſuch actions reputable; or from the particular love the brothers bore their ſiſter, which might induce them to act thus, as an inſtance of it.

Ver. 26. ——— *The ſeeming virgin,* &c.] It may be aſked why Minerva does not appear as a goddeſs, but in a borrowed form? The poet has already told us, that ſhe dreaded the wrath of Neptune; one deity could not openly oppoſe another, and therefore ſhe acts inviſibly.

And

And youthful ſmil'd; but in the low diſguiſe
Lay hid the goddeſs with the azure eyes.
Show me, fair daughter, (thus the chief demands)
The houſe of him who rules theſe happy lands.
Thro' many woes and wand'rings, lo! I come
To good Alcinous' hoſpitable dome.
Far from my native coaſt, I rove alone,
A wretched ſtranger, and of all unknown!
The goddeſs anſwer'd. Father, I obey,
And point the wand'ring traveller his way:
Well known to me the palace you inquire,
For faſt beſide it dwells my honour'd ſire;
But ſilent march, nor greet the common train
With queſtion needleſs, or enquiry vain.
A race of rugged mariners are theſe;
Unpoliſh'd men, and boiſtrous as their ſeas:
The native iſlanders alone their care,
And hateful he that breathes a foreign air.
Theſe did the ruler of the deep ordain
To build proud navies, and command the main;
On canvas wings to cut the wat'ry way;
Nor bird ſo light, no thought ſo ſwift as they.
Thus having ſpoke, th' unknown celeſtial leads:
The footſteps of the deity he treads,
And ſecret moves along the crowded ſpace,
Unſeen of all the rude Phæacian race.
(So Pallas order'd, Pallas to their eyes
The miſt objected, and condens'd the ſkies.)
The chief with wonder ſees th' extended ſtreets,
The ſpreading harbours, and the riding fleets;

Ver. 47. *On canvas wings to cut the wat'ry way.*] This circumſtance is not inſerted without a good effect: it could not but greatly encourage Ulyſſes to underſtand, that he was arrived amongſt a people that excelled in navigation; this gave him a proſpect of being ſpeedily conveyed to his own country, by the aſſiſtance of a nation ſo expert in maritime affairs. *Euſtathius.*

He

He next their princes lofty domes admires,
In ſep'rate iſlands crown'd with riſing ſpires;
And deep intrenchments, and high walls of ſtone,
That girt the city like a marble zone.
At length the kingly palace gate he view'd:
There ſtopp'd the goddeſs and her ſpeech renew'd.
My taſk is done; the manſion you inquire
Appears before you: enter, and admire.
High-thron'd, and feaſting, there thou ſhalt behold
The ſceptred rulers. Fear not, but be bold:
A decent boldneſs ever meets with friends,
Succeeds, and ev'n a ſtranger recommends.
Firſt to the queen prefer a ſuppliant's claim,
Alcinous' queen, Arete is her name,
The ſame her parents, and her pow'r the ſame.
For know, from ocean's god Nauſithous ſprung,
And Peribæa, beautiful and young:
(Eurymedon's laſt hope, who rul'd of old
The race of giants, impious, proud, and bold;
Periſh'd the nation in unrighteous war,
Periſh'd the prince, and left this only heir.)
Who now by Neptune's am'rous pow'r compreſt,
Produce'd a monarch that his people bleſt,
Father and prince of the Phæacian name;
From him Rhexenor and Alcinous came.

Ver. 74. *Eurymedon*, &c.] This paſſage is worthy obſervation, as it diſcovers to us the time when the race of the ancient giants periſhed; this Eurymedon was grandfather to Nauſithous, the father of Alcinous; ſo that the giants were extirpated forty or fifty years before the war of Troy. This exactly agrees with ancient ſtory, which informs us, that Hercules and Theſeus purged the earth from thoſe monſters. Plutarch in his life of Theſeus tells us, that they were men of great ſtrength, and public robbers, one of whom was called the "Bender of pines." Now Theſeus ſtole away Helen in her infancy, and conſequently theſe giants were deſtroyed ſome years before the Trojan expedition. *Dacier, Plutarch.*

The

The firſt by Phœbus' burning arrows fir'd,
New from his nuptials, hapleſs youth! expir'd.
No ſon ſurviv'd: Arete heir'd his ſtate,
And her, Alcinous choſe his royal mate.
With honours yet to womankind unknown,
This queen he graces, and divides the throne:
In equal tenderneſs her ſons conſpire,
And all the children emulate their ſire.
When thro' the ſtreet ſhe gracious deigns to move,
(The public wonder, and the public love)
The tongues of all with tranſport ſound her praiſe,
The eyes of all, as on a goddeſs, gaze.
She feels the triumph of a gen'rous breaſt;
To heal diviſions, to relieve th' oppreſt;
In virtue rich; in bleſſing others, bleſt.
Go then ſecure, thy humble ſuit prefer,
And owe thy country and thy friends to her.
With that the goddeſs deign'd no longer ſtay,
But o'er the world of waters wing'd her way:

Ver. 84, &c. *Arete.*] It is obſervable that this Arete was both wife and niece to Alcinous, an inſtance that the Grecians married with ſuch near relations: the ſame appears from Demoſthenes and other Greek orators. But what then is the notion of inceſt amongſt the ancients? The collateral branch was not thought inceſtuous, for Juno was the wife and ſiſter of Jupiter. Brothers likewiſe married their brothers wives, as Deiphobus Helen, after the death of Paris: the ſame was practiſed amongſt the Jews, and conſequently being permitted by Moſes was not inceſtuous. So that the only inceſt was in the aſcending, not collateral or deſcending branch; as when parents and children married; thus when Myrrha lay with her father, and Lot with his daughters, this was accounted inceſt. The reaſon is very evident, a child cannot pay the duty of a child to a parent, and at the ſame time of a wife or huſband; nor can a father act with the authority of a father towards a perſon who is at once his wife and daughter. The relations interfere, and introduce confuſion, where the law of nature and reaſon requires regularity.

Forſaking Scheria's ever-pleaſing ſhore,
The winds to Marathon the virgin bore;
Thence, where proud Athens rears her tow'ry head,
With opening ſtreets and ſhining ſtructures ſpread,
She paſt, delighted with the well known ſeats;
And to Erectheus' ſacred dome retreats.

Meanwhile Ulyſſes at the palace waits,
There ſtops, and anxious with his ſoul debates
Fix'd in amaze before the royal gates.
The front appear'd with radiant ſplendour gay,
Bright as the lamp of night, or orb of day,
The walls were maſſy braſs: the cornice high
Blue metals crown'd, in colours of the ſky:
Rich plates of gold the folding doors incaſe;
The pillars ſilver, on a brazen baſe;
Silver the lintals deep-projecting o'er,
And gold, the ringlets that command the door.
Two rows of ſtately dogs, on either hand,
In ſculptur'd gold and labour'd ſilver ſtand.
Theſe Vulcan form'd, with art divine, to wait
Immortal guardians at Alcinous' gate;
Alive each animated frame appears,
And ſtill to live beyond the pow'r of years.
Fair thrones within from ſpace to ſpace were rais'd,
Where various carpets with embroidery blaz'd,

The

Ver. 118. *Two rows of ſtately dogs*, &c.] We have already ſeen that dogs were kept as a piece of ſtate, from the inſtance of thoſe that attended Telemachus: here Alcinous has images of dogs in gold, for the ornament of his palace; Homer animates them in his poetry; but, to ſoften the deſcription, he introduces Vulcan, and aſcribes the wonder to the power of a god.

Ver. 124. *Fair thrones within*, &c.] The poet does not ſay of what materials theſe thrones were made, whether of gold or ſilver, to avoid the imputation of being thought fabulous in his deſcription; it being almoſt incredible, remarks Euſtathius, that ſuch quantities of gold and ſilver could be in the poſſeſſion of ſuch a king

The work of matrons: theſe the princes preſt,
Day following day, a long continu'd feaſt.
Refulgent pedeſtals the walls ſurround,
Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd;
The poliſh'd ore, reflecting ev'ry ray,
Blaz'd on the banquets with a double day.
Full fifty handmaids form the houſhold train;
Some turn the mill, or ſift the golden grain;
Some ply the loom; their buſy fingers move
Like poplar leaves when Zephyr fans the grove.
Not more renown'd the men of Scheria's iſle,
For ſailing arts and all the naval toil,
Than works of female ſkill their women's pride,
The flying ſhuttle thro' the threads to guide:

Pallas

as Alcinous; though, if we conſider that his people were greatly given to navigation, the relation may come within the bounds of credibility.

Ver. 128. *Refulgent pedeſtals the walls ſurround,*
Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd.]

This is a remarkable piece of grandeur: lamps, as appears from the eighteenth of the Odyſſey, were not at this time known to the Grecians, but only torches: theſe were held by images in the ſhape of beautiful youths, and thoſe images were of gold. Lucretius has tranſlated theſe verſes.

"——— Aurea ſunt juvenum ſimulacra per ædeis,
"Lampades igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,
"Lumina nocturnis epulis ut ſuppeditentur."

It is admirable to obſerve with what propriety Homer adapts his poetry to the characters of his perſons: Neſtor is a wiſe man, when he is firſt ſeen in the Odyſſey, it is at a ſacrifice, and there is not the leaſt appearance of pomp or luxury in his palace or entertainments. The Phæacians are of an oppoſite character, and the poet deſcribes them conſiſtently with it; they are all along a proud, idle, effeminate people; though ſuch a pompous deſcription would have ill ſuited the wiſe Neſtor, it excellently agrees with the vain Alcinous.

Ver 138. ——*Works of female ſkill their women's pride.*] We may gather from what Homer here relates concerning the ſkill of theſe

Phæacian

Pallas to theſe her double gifts imparts,
Inventive genius, and induſtrious arts.
Cloſe to the gates a ſpacious garden lies,
From ſtorms defended and inclement ſkies.
Four acres was th' alloted ſpace of ground,
Fence'd with a green encloſure all around,
Tall thriving trees confeſs'd the fruitful mould;
The red'ning apple ripens here to gold.
Here the blue fig with luſcious juice o'erflows,
With deeper red the full pomegranate glows,

Phæacian damſels, that they were famed for theſe works of curioſity: the Corcyrians were much given to traffic, and perhaps they might bring ſlaves from the Sidonians, who inſtructed them in theſe manufactures. *Dacier.*

Ver. 142. *Cloſe to the gates a ſpacious garden lies.*] This famous garden of Alcinous contains no more than four acres of ground, which in thoſe times of ſimplicity was thought a large one even for a prince. It is laid out as Euſtathias obſerves, into three parts: a grove for fruits and ſhade, a vineyard, and an allotment for olives and herbs. It is watered with two fountains, the one ſupplies the palace and town, the other the garden and the flowers. But it may be aſked what reality there is in the relation, and whether any trees bear fruit all the year in this iſland? Euſtathius obſerves, that experience teaches the contrary, and that it is only true of the greateſt part of the year; Homer, adds he, diſguiſes the true ſituation of the Phæacians, and here deſcribes it as one of the happy iſlands; at once to inrich his poetry, and to avoid a diſcovery of his poetical exaggeration. The relation is true of other places, if Pliny and Theophraſtus deſerve credit, as Dacier obſerves; thus the citron bears during the whole year fruits and flowers. "Arbos ipſa omnibus horis promifera, aliis cadentibus, aliis matureſcentibus, aliis vero ſubnaſcentibus." The ſame is related of other trees by Pliny: "Novuſque fructus in his cum annotino pendet;" he affirms the like of the pine, "Habet fructum matureſcentem, habet proximo anno ad maturitatem, venturum, ac deinde tertio," &c. So that what Homer relates is in itſelf true, though not entirely of Phæacia. Or perhaps it might be only intended for a more beautiful and poetical manner of deſcribing the conſtant ſucceſſion of one fruit after another in a fertile climate.

The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear,
And verdant olives flouriſh round the year.
The balmy ſpirit of the weſtern gale
Eternal breathes on fruits untaught to fail:
Each dropping pear a following pear ſupplies,
On apples apples, figs on figs ariſe:
The ſame mild ſeaſon gives the blooms to blow,
The buds to harden, and the fruits to grow.
Here order'd vines in equal ranks appear,
With all th' united labours of the year;
Some to unload the fertile branches run,
Some dry the black'ning cluſters in the ſun,
Others to tread the liquid harveſt join,
The groaning preſſes foam with floods of wine.
Here are the vines in early flow'r deſcry'd,
Here grapes diſcolour'd on the ſunny ſide,
And there in autumn's richeſt purple dy'd.
Beds of all various herbs, for ever green,
In beauteous order terminate the ſcene.
Two plenteous fountains the whole proſpect crown'd;
This thro' the gardens leads its ſtreams around,
Viſits each plant, and waters all the ground:
While that in pipes beneath the palace flows,
And thence its current on the town beſtows;
To various uſe their various ſtreams they bring,
The people one, and one ſupplies the king.
Such were the glories which the gods ordain'd,
To grace Alcinous, and his happy land.

Ver. 161. *Some dry the black'ning cluſters in the ſun.*] To underſtand this paſſage aright, it is neceſſary to know the manner of ordering the vintage amongſt the Greeks. Firſt, they carried all the grapes they gathered into a houſe for a ſeaſon; afterwards they expoſed them ten days to the ſun, and let them lie abroad as many nights in the freſhneſs of the air; then they kept them five days in cool ſhades, and on the ſixth they trod them, and put the wine into veſſels.

Ev'n

Ev'n from the chief, who men and nations knew,
Th' unwonted ſcene ſurpriſe and rapture drew;
In pleaſing thought he ran the proſpect o'er,
Then haſty enter'd at the lofty door.
Night now approaching, in the palace ſtand,
With goblets crown'd, the rulers of the land;
Prepar'd for reſt, and off'ring to the * god
Who bears the virtue of the ſleepy rod.
Unſeen he glided through the joyous croud,
With darkneſs circled, and an ambient cloud.
Direct to great Alcinous' throne he came,
And proſtrate fell before th' imperial dame.
Then from around him dropp'd the veil of night;
Sudden he ſhines, and manifeſt to ſight.
The nobles gaze, with awful fear oppreſt;
Silent they gaze, and eye the god-like gueſt.
Daughter of great Rhexenor! (thus began
Low at her knees, the much-induring man)
To thee, thy conſort, and this royal train,
To all that ſhare the bleſſings of your reign,
A ſuppliant bends: oh pity human woe!
'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe.

* Mercury.

Ver. 184. *Prepar'd for reſt, and off'ring to the god*
Who bears the virtue of the ſleepy rod.]

I have already explained from Athenæus this cuſtom of offering to Mercury at the concluſion of entertainments: he was thought by the ancients to preſide over ſleep: "Dat ſomnos admitque," according to Horace, as Dacier obſerves. In following ages this practice was altered, and they offered not to Mercury, but to Jove the Perfecter, or to Διὸς τέλειου.

Ver. 196. *To thee, thy conſort, and this royal train.*] Minerva commanded Ulyſſes to ſupplicate the queen: why then does he exceed the directions of the goddeſs, and not only addreſs himſelf to Alcinous, but to the reſt of the aſſembly? Spondanus anſwers, that Ulyſſes adapts himſelf to the preſent circumſtances, and ſeeing the

A wretched exile to his country ſend,
Long worn with griefs, and long without a friend.
So may the gods your better days increaſe,
And all your joys deſcend on all your race,
So reign for ever on your country's breaſt,
Your people bleſſing, by your people bleſt!
Then to the genial hearth he bow'd his face,
And humbled in the aſhes took his place.

Silence

king and other peers in the ſame aſſembly, he thought it improper not to take notice of them: he therefore addreſſes himſelf to all, that he may make all his friends. But then does not Minerva give improper directions? and is not Ulyſſes more wiſe than the goddeſs of wiſdom? The true reaſon therefore may perhaps be, that Ulyſſes really complies with the injunctions of the goddeſs: ſhe commands him to addreſs himſelf to the queen: and he does ſo: this I take to mean chiefly or primarily, but not excluſively of the king: if the paſſage be thus underſtood, it ſolves the objection.

Ver. 200. *A wretched exile to his country ſend.*] Ulyſſes here ſpeaks very conciſely: and he may ſeem to break abruptly into the ſubject of his petition, without letting the audience either into the knowledge of his condition or perſon. Was this a proper method to prevail over an aſſembly of ſtrangers? But his geſture ſpoke for him, he threw himſelf into the poſture of a ſuppliant, and the perſons of all ſuppliants were eſteemed to be ſacred: he declared himſelf to be a man in calamity, and reſerves his ſtory to be told more at large, when the ſurpriſe of the Phæacians at the ſudden appearance of a ſtranger was over; this conciſeneſs therefore is not blamable, but rather an inſtance of Homer's judgement, who knows when to be ſhort, and when to be copious.

Ver. 207. *And humbled in the aſhes took his place.*] This was the cuſtom of ſuppliants; they betook themſelves to the hearth as ſacred, and a place of refuge. It was particularly in the protection of Veſta: thus Tully, lib. ii. de Naturâ Deorum; "Nomen ve-"ſtæ ſumptum eſt a Græcis, ea eſt enim quæ illis ἑστία dicitor, "juſque ejus ad aras, et focos pertinet." Apollonius likewiſe, as Spondanus obſerves, takes notice of this cuſtom of ſuppliants.

Τῷ

Silence enſu'd. The eldeſt firſt began,
Echeneus ſage, a venerable man!
Whoſe well-taught mind the preſent age ſurpaſt,
And join'd to that th' experience of the laſt.
Fit words attended on his weighty ſenſe,
And mild perſuaſion flow'd in eloquence.
Oh ſight (he cry'd) diſhoneſt and unjuſt!
A gueſt, a ſtranger, ſeated in the duſt!
To raiſe the lowly ſuppliant from the ground
Befits a monarch. Lo! the peers around
But wait thy word, the gentle gueſt to grace,
And ſeat him fair in ſome diſtinguiſh'd place.
Let firſt the herald due libation pay
To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way;
Then ſet the genial banquet in his view,
And give the ſtranger-gueſt a ſtranger's due.

Τὼ δ' ἄνεω, καὶ ἀνανδοι, ἐφ' ἑστίῃ αἰξαντες
Ἷζανον, ἥτε δίκη λυσσοῖς ἱκέτησι τέτυκται.

That is, they betook themſelves to the hearth, and there ſat mute, which is the cuſtom of all unhappy ſuppliants. If it was a cuſtom, as Apollonius obſerves, to ſit mute, this gives another reaſon why Ulyſſes uſed but few words in his ſupplication: he had greatly outraged a practice that was eſtabliſhed as ſacred amongſt the Greeks, and had not acted in the character of a ſuppliant, if he had launched out into a long oration.

This was the moſt ſure and effectual way of ſupplication; thus when Themiſtocles fled to Admetus king of the Moloſſians, he placed himſelf before the hearth, and was received, though that king had formerly vowed his deſtruction. Plutarch indeed calls it an unuſual way of ſupplication, but that proceeded from his carrying a child in his arms to move the greater compaſſion, not from his throwing himſelf into the protection of the houſhold gods.

Ver. 209. *Echeneus ſage*, &c.] The expreſſion in the original, as Dacier obſerves, is remarkable: "Echeneus an old man, who "knew many ancient, and great variety of things;" he was wiſe by long experience, and by being converſant in ancient ſtory: the author of the book of Wiſdom ſpeaks almoſt in the ſame expreſſions: "Scit præterita, et de futuris æſtimat."

His

His ſage advice the liſt'ning king obeys,
He ſtretch'd his hand the prudent chief to raiſe,
And from his ſeat Laodamas remov'd,
(The monarch's offspring, and his beſt belov'd)
There next his ſide the god like hero ſat;
With ſtars of ſilver ſhone the bed of ſtate.
The golden ew'r a beauteous handmaid brings,
Repleniſh'd from the cool tranſlucent ſprings,
Whoſe poliſh'd vaſe with copious ſtreams ſupplies
A ſilver laver, of capacious ſize.
The table next in regal order ſpread,
The glitt'ring caniſters are heap'd with bread:
Viands of various kinds invite the taſte,
Of choiceſt ſort and ſavour, rich repaſt!
Thus feaſting high, Alcinous gave the ſign,
And bade the herald pour the roſy wine.
Let all around the due libation pay
To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way.
He ſaid. Pontonus heard the king's command;
The circling goblet moves from hand to hand:
Each drinks the juice that glads the heart of man
Alcinous then, with aſpect mild, began.
Princes and peers, attend! while we impart
To you, the thoughts of no inhuman heart.

Ver. 226. *And from his ſeat Laodamas remov'd*] Plutarch in his Sympoſiacs diſcuſſes a queſtion, whether the maſter of the feaſt ſhould place his gueſts, or let them ſeat themſelves promiſcuouſly: he there commends this conduct of Alcinous, as an inſtance of a courteous diſpoſition and great humanity, who gave a place of dignity to a ſtranger and ſuppliant.

Ver. 240. ——— *The due libation pay*
To Jove ————]

We have already ſeen that the whole aſſembly was about to pour libations to Mercury; whence is it then that they now offer to Jupiter? Euſtathius obſerves, it was becauſe of the arrival of this ſtranger, and Jupiter preſides over all ſtrangers, and is frequently ſtiled Ζεὺς ξένιος, and Ζεὺς ἱκεσίος.

Now

Now pleas'd and ſatiate from the ſocial rite
Repair we to the bleſſings of the night:
But with the riſing day, aſſembled here,
Let all the elders of the land appear,
Pious obſerve our hoſpitable laws,
And heav'n propitious in the ſtranger's cauſe:
Then join'd in council, proper means explore
Safe to tranſport him to the wiſht for ſhore:
(How diſtant that, imports not us to know,
Nor weigh the labour, but relieve the woe)
Meantime, nor harm nor anguiſh let him bear:
This interval, heav'n truſts him to our care;
But to his native land our charge reſign'd.
Heav'n's is his life to come, and all the woes behind.
Then muſt he ſuffer what the fates ordain:
For fate has wove the thread of life with pain,
And twins ev'n from the birth, are miſery and man!
But if deſcended from th' Olympian bow'r,
Gracious approach us ſome immortal pow'r;
If in that form thou com'ſt a gueſt divine:
Some high event the conſcious gods deſign.
As yet, unbid they never grace'd our feaſt,
The ſolemn ſacrifice call'd down the gueſt;
Then manifeſt of heav'n the viſion ſtood,
And to our eyes familiar was the god,
Oft with ſome favour'd traveller they ſtray,
And ſhine before him all the deſert way:
With ſocial intercourſe, and face to face,
The friends and guardians of our pious race.
So near approach we their celeſtial kind,
By juſtice, truth, and probity of mind;
As our dire neighbours of Cyclopæan birth,
Match in fierce wrong, the giant-ſons of earth.
Let no ſuch thought (with modeſt grace rejoin'd
The prudent Greek) poſſeſs the royal mind.

Alas!

Alas! a mortal, like thyſelf, am I;
No glorious native of yon azure ſky:
In form, ah how unlike their heav'nly kind?
How more inferior in the gifts of mind?
Alas, a mortal! moſt oppreſt of thoſe
Whom fate has loaded with a weight of woes;
By a ſad train of miſeries alone
Diſtinguiſh'd long, and ſecond now to none!
By heav'n's high will compell'd from ſhore to ſhore;
With heav'n's high will prepar'd to ſuffer more.
What hiſtories of toil could I declare?
But ſtill long-weary'd nature wants repair;
Spent with fatigue, and ſhrunk with pining faſt,
My craving bowels ſtill require repaſt.
Howe'er the noble, ſuff'ring mind, may grieve
Its load of anguiſh, and diſdain to live;
Neceſſity demands our daily bread;
Hunger is inſolent, and will be fed.
But finiſh, oh ye peers! what you propoſe,
And let the morrow's dawn conclude my woes.
Pleas'd will I ſuffer all the gods ordain,
To ſee my ſoil, my ſon, my friends, again.
That view vouchſaf'd, let inſtant death ſurpriſe
With ever-during ſhade theſe happy eyes!
Th' aſſembled peers with gen'ral praiſe approv'd
His pleaded reaſon, and the ſuit he mov'd.

Each

Ver. 305. *That view vouchſaf'd, let inſtant death,* &c.] It is very neceſſary to recall frequently to the reader's mind the deſire Ulyſſes has to reach his own country; and to ſhew that he is abſent not by choice, but neceſſity; all the diſorders in his kingdom happen by reaſon of his abſence: it is therefore neceſſary to ſet the deſire of his return in the ſtrongeſt point of light, that he may not ſeem acceſſary to thoſe diſorders, by being abſent when it was in his power to return. It is obſervable that Ulyſſes does not here make any mention of Penelope, whom he ſcarce ever omits in other places, as one of the chief inducements to wiſh for his country; the

Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
And to the gifts of balmy ſleep repairs,
Ulyſſes in the regal walls alone
Remain'd: beſide him, on a ſplendid throne,
Divine Arete and Alcinous ſhone,
The queen on nearer view, the gueſt ſurvey'd
Rob'd in the garments her own hands had made;
Not without wonder ſeen. Then thus began,
Her words addreſſing to the god-like man.

Cam'ſt thou not hither, wond'rous ſtranger! ſay,
From lands remote, and o'er a length of ſea?
Tell then whence art thou? whence that princely air?
And robes like theſe, ſo recent and ſo fair!

Hard is the taſk, oh princeſs you impoſe:
(Thus ſighing ſpoke the man of many woes)
The long, the mournful ſeries to relate
Of all my ſorrows, ſent by heav'n and fate!
Yet what you aſk, attend. An iſland lies
Beyond theſe tracts, and under other ſkies,

Ogygia

the reaſon of his ſilence, ſays Euſtathius, is, becauſe he is unwilling to abate the favour of Alcinous, by a diſcovery that would ſhew it was impoſſible for him to marry his daughter; ſuch a diſcovery might make the king proceed more coolly towards his tranſportation; whereas it would afterwards be leſs dangerous, when he has had an opportunity fully to engage him in his favour.

Ver. 326. *Yet what you aſk, attend.*——] Homer here gives a ſummary of the ſubject of the two preceding books: this recapitulation cannot indeed be avoided, becauſe it is neceſſary to let Alcinous into his ſtory, and this cannot be done without a repetition; but generally all repetitions are tedious: the reader is offended when that is related which he knows already: he receives no new inſtruction to entertain his judgement, nor any new deſcriptions to excite his curioſity, and by theſe means the very ſoul of poetry is extinguiſhed, and it becomes unſpirited and lifeleſs. When therefore repetitions are abſolutely neceſſary, they ought always to be ſhort; and I may appeal to the reader if he is not tired with many in Homer, eſpecially when made in the very ſame words?

Ogygia named, in ocean's wat'ry arms:
Where dwells Calypſo, dreadful in her charms!
Remote from gods or men ſhe holds her rein,
Amid the terrours of the rolling main.

words? Here indeed Ulyſſes tells his ſtory but in part; the queen aſked him who he was; but he paſſes over this without any reply, and reſerves the greateſt part of his ſtory to a time of more leiſure, that he may diſcover himſelf to a better advantage before the whole peerage of the Phæacians. I do not always condemn even the verbal repetitions of Homer; ſometimes as in embaſſies they may be neceſſary, because every word is ſtamped with authority, and perhaps they might be cuſtomary in Homer's times; if they were not, he had too fruitful an invention not to have varied his thoughts and expreſſions. Boſſu obſerves, that with reſpect to repetitions, Virgil is more exact than Homer; for inſtance, in the firſt book of the Æneis, when Æneas is repeating his ſufferings to Venus, ſhe interrupts him to give him comfort;

——— " Nec plura querentem
" Paſſa Venus, medio ſic interfata dolore eſt."

And in the third book, where good manners obliged this hero to relate his ſtory at the requeſt of Andromache, the poet prevents it by introducing Helenus, who hinders the repetition.

Ver. 330. *Remote from gods or men ſhe holds her rein.*] Homer has the ſecret art of introducing the beſt inſtructions, in the midſt of the plaineſt narrations. He has deſcribed the unworthy paſſion of the goddeſs Calypſo, and the indecent advances ſhe made to detain him from his country. It is poſſible this relation might make ſome impreſſions upon the mind of the reader, inconſiſtent with exact morality: what antidote then does Homer adminiſter to expel this poiſon? he does not content himſelf with ſetting the chaſtity of Penelope in oppoſition to the looſe deſires of Calypſo, and ſhewing the great advantage the mortal has over the goddeſs; but he here diſcovers the fountain from whence this weakneſs riſes, by ſaying, that neither man nor gods frequented this iſland; on one hand, the abſence of the gods, and on the other, the infrequency of objects, made her yield at the ſight of the firſt that appears. Every object is dangerous in ſolitude, eſpecially as Homer expreſſes it, if we have no commerce with the gods. *Dacier.*

Me, only me, the hand of fortune bore
Unbleſt! to tread that interdicted ſhore:
When Jove tremendous in the ſable deeps
Lanch'd his red lightning at our ſcatter'd ſhips:
Then, all my fleet, and all my followers loſt,
Sole on a plank, on boiling ſurges toſt,
Heav'n drove my wreck th' Ogygian iſle to find,
Full nine days floating to the waves and wind.
Met by the goddeſs there with open arms,
She brib'd my ſtay with more than human charms;
Nay promis'd, vainly promis'd, to beſtow
Immortal life, exempt from age and woe.
But all her blandiſhments ſucceſsleſs prove,
To baniſh from my breaſt my country's love.
I ſtay reluctant ſev'n continu'd years,
And water her ambroſial couch with tears.
The eighth, ſhe voluntary moves to part,
Or urge'd by Jove, or her own changeful heart.
A raft was form'd to croſs the ſurging ſea;
Herſelf ſupply'd the ſtores and rich array;
And gave the gales to waft me on the way.
In ſev'nteen days appear'd your pleaſing coaſt,
And woody mountains half in vapours loſt.
Joy touch'd my ſoul: my ſoul was joy'd in vain,
For angry Neptune rous'd the raging main;

Ver. 344. *But all her blandiſhments ſucceſsleſs prove,*——] Dacier from Euſtathius aſſigns the reaſon of the refuſal of Ulyſſes to comply with the proffers of Calypſo, to forſake his wife and country: it was, becauſe he knew that women in love promiſe more than they either can, or intend to perform. An inſinuation, that he would have complied if he had thought the goddeſs would, or could have performed her promiſes. But this is contrary to the character of Ulyſſes, whoſe greateſt glory it is, not to have liſtened even to a goddeſs. In this view he ceaſes to be an hero, and his returns is no longer a virtue, but he return only becauſe he found not a temptation ſufficient to keep him from his country.

The wild winds whiſtle, and the billows roar;
The ſplitting raft the furious tempeſt tore;
And ſtorms vendictive intercept the ſhore.
Soon as their rage ſubſides, the ſeas I brave
With naked force, and ſhoot along the wave,
To reach this iſle: but there my hopes were loſt,
The ſurge impell'd me on a craggy coaſt.
I choſe the ſafer ſea, and chance'd to find
A river's mouth imprevious to the wind,
And clear of rocks. I fainted by the flood;
Then took the ſhelter of the neigh'ring wood.
'Twas night; and cover'd in the foliage deep,
Jove plunge'd my ſenſes in the death of ſleep.
All night I ſlept, oblivious of my pain:
Aurora dawn'd, and Phœbus ſhin'd in vain,
Nor 'till oblique he ſlop'd his ev'ning ray,
Had Somnus dry'd the balmy dews away.
Then female voices from the ſhore I hear'd:
A maid amidſt them, goddeſs-like, appear'd:
To her I ſu'd, ſhe pity'd my diſtreſs;
Like thee in beauty, nor in virtue leſs.
Who from ſuch youth cou'd hope conſid'rate care?
In youth and beauty wiſdom is but rare!

She

Ver. 379. *In youth and beauty wiſdom is but rare!*] In the preceding line Ulyſſes ſpeaks of Nauſicaa, yet immediately changes the words into the maſculine gender, for grammatically it ought to be νεοτέρην ἀνὴ ἐόσασαν. Homer makes this alteration to pay the greater compliment to Nauſicaa, and he intends to expreſs by it, that neither woman nor man of her years could be expected to have ſuch remarkable diſcretion. *Euſtathius.*

Such ſentences being very frequent in the Odyſſey; it may not be improper to obſerve, of what beauty a ſentence is in epic poetry. A ſentence may be defined, a moral inſtruction couched in a few words. Rapin aſſerts, that ſentences are more proper in dramatic than heroic poetry: for narration is the eſſential character of it, and it ought to be one continued thread of diſcourſe, ſimple and natural, without an affectation of figures or moral reflections: that

energy

She gave me life, reliev'd with juſt ſupplies
My wants, and lent theſe robes that ſtrike your eyes.
This is the truth: and oh ye pow'rs on high!
Forbid that want ſhould ſink me to a lye.
To this the king. Our daughter but expreſt
Her cares imperfect to our god-like gueſt.
Suppliant to her, ſince firſt he choſe to pray
Why not herſelf did ſhe conduct the way,
And with her handmaids to our court convey?
Hero and king! (Ulyſſes thus reply'd)
Nor blame her faultleſs, nor ſuſpect of pride:

energy which ſome pretend to collect and incloſe within a ſmall compaſs of words, is wont extremely to weaken the reſt of the diſcourſe, and give it a forced air: it ſeems to jut out of the ſtructure of the poem, and to be independent of it: he blames Homer for ſcattering his ſentences too plentifully through his poeſy, and calls it an affectation and imperfection. Theſe objections would undoubtedly be of weight, if the ſentences were ſo introduced as to break the thread of narration, as Rapin rightly obſerves. But is this the caſe with relation to Homer? He puts them into the mouth of the actors themſelves, and the narration goes on without the leaſt interruption; it is not the poet who ſpeaks, nor does he ſuſpend the narration to make a refined reflections or give us a ſentence of morality. Is his poetry the worſe, becauſe he makes his agents ſpeak weightily and ſententiouſly? It is true, ſentences uſed without moderation are abſurd in epic poetry; they give it a ſeriouſneſs that is more becoming the gravity of philoſophers, than the ſpirit and majeſty of poetry. Boſſu judiciouſly obſerves, that ſuch thoughts have in their very nature a certain kind of calm wiſdom that is contrary to the paſſions; but, ſays he, ſentences make a poem uſeful, and it ſeems natural to imagine, that the more a work is embelliſhed with them, the more it deſerves that general approbation which Horace promiſes to thoſe who have the art to mix the profitable with the pleaſant. In ſhort, ſentences are not only allowable, but beautiful in heroic poetry, if they are introduced with propriety and without affectation.

She bade me follow in th' attendant train;
But fear and rev'rence did my ſteps detain,
Leſt raſh ſuſpicion might alarm thy mind:
Man's of a jealous and miſtaking kind:
Far from my ſoul (he cry'd) the gods efface
All wrath ill-grounded, and ſuſpicion baſe!
Whate'er is honeſt, ſtranger, I approve,
And would to Phœbus, Pallas, and to Jove,
Such as thou art, thy thought and mine were one,
Nor thou unwilling to be call'd my ſon.
In ſuch alliance could'ſt thou wiſh to join,
A palace ſtor'd with treaſures ſhould be thine.

But

Ver. 391. *She bade me follow———*
But fear and rev'rence, &c.]

This is directly contrary to what is before aſſerted in the preceding book, where Nauſicaa forbids Ulyſſes to attend her, to avoid ſuſpicion and ſlander. Is not Ulyſſes then guilty of falſhood, and is not falſhood beneath the character of a hero? Euſtathius confeſſes that Ulyſſes is guilty, φανερῶς ψεύδεται; and he adds, that a wiſe man may do ſometimes opportunely; Ὅπερ ἂν ποιήσει ἐν καιρῷ ὁ σοφός. I fear this conceſſion of the biſhop's would not paſs for good caſuiſtry in theſe ages. Spondanus is of the ſame opinion as Euſtathius; "Vir prudens certo loco et tempore mendaciis officiosiſſimis uti novit." Dacier confeſſes that he ſomewhat diſguiſes the truth. It will be difficult to vindicate Ulyſſes from the imputation, if the notions of truth and falſhood were as ſtrict in former, as in theſe ages: but we muſt not meaſure by this ſtandard: it is certain that anciently lying was reckoned no crime by a whole nation; and it ſtill bears a diſpute, "An omne falſiloquium ſit "mendacium?" Some caſuiſts allow of the "officioſum menda-"cium;" and ſuch is this of Ulyſſes, intirely complimental and officious.

Ver. 400. *Nor thou unwilling to be call'd my ſon.*] The ancients obſerve, that Alcinous very artfully inſerts this propoſition to Ulyſſes, to prove his veracity. If he had embraced it without heſitation, he would have concluded him an impoſtor; for it is not conceivable that he ſhould reject all the temptation to marriage made him by Calypſo a goddeſs, and yet immediately embrace this offer

of

But if reluctant, who ſhall force thy ſtay?
Jove bids to ſet the ſtranger on his way,
And ſhips ſhall wait thee with the morning ray.
'Till then, let ſlumber cloſe thy careful eyes;
The wakeful mariners ſhall watch the ſkies,
And ſeize the moment when the breezes riſe:
Then gently waft thee to the pleaſing ſhore,
Where thy ſoul reſts, and labour is no more
Far as Eubæa tho' thy country lay,
Our ſhips with eaſe tranſport thee in a day.
Thither of old, earth's * giant-ſon to view,
On wings of winds with Radamanth they flew:

of Alcinous to marry his daughter. But if we take the paſſage in another ſenſe, and believe that Alcinous ſpoke ſincerely without any ſecret ſuſpicions, yet his conduct is juſtifiable. It has I confeſs appeared ſhocking, that Alcinous, a king, ſhould at the very firſt interview offer his daughter to a ſtranger, who might be a vagrant and impoſtor: but examples are frequent in antiquity of marriages thus concluded between ſtrangers, and with as little heſitation: thus Bellerophon, Tydeus, and Polinyces were married. Great perſonages regarded not riches, but were only ſolicitous to procure worthy huſbands for their daughters, and birth and virtue were the beſt recommendations.

It is obſervable that in the original there is a chaſm, an infinitive mood without any thing to govern it; we muſt therefore ſupply the word ἐθέλοις to make it right conſtruction. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 411. *Far as Eubæa tho' thy country lay.*] Eubæa, as Euſtathius obſerves, is really far diſtant from Corcyra, the country of the Phæacians: but Alcinous ſtill makes it more diſtant, by placing it in another part of the world, and deſcribing it as one of the Fortunate Iſlands: for in the fourth book Rhadamanthus is ſaid to inhabit the Elyſian fields. Alcinous therefore endeavours to have it believed that his iſle is near thoſe fields, by aſſerting that Rhadamanthus made uſe of Phæacian veſſels in his voyage to Tityus. Euſtathius further adds, that Rhadamanthus was a prince of great juſtice, and Tityus a perſon of great impiety, and that he made this voyage to bring him over to more virtuous diſpoſitions.

* Tytyus.

This land, from whence their morning courſe begun,
Saw them returning with the ſetting ſun.
Your eyes ſhall witneſs and confirm my tale,
Our youth how dext'rous, and how fleet our ſail,
When juſtly tim'd with equal ſweep they row,
And ocean whitens in long tracks below.
Thus he. No word th' experience'd man replies,
But thus to heav'n (and heav'nward lifts his eyes)
O Jove! oh father! what the king accords
Do thou make perfect! ſacred be his words!

Ver. 415. *This land from whence their morning courſe begun,*
Saw them returning with the ſetting ſun.]

If Homer had given the true ſituation of Corcyra as it really lies oppoſite to Epirus, yet the hyperbole of ſailing thence to Ebæa and returning in the ſame day, had been utterly an impoſſibility; for in ſailing thither, they muſt paſs the Ionian and Icarian ſeas, and double the Peloponneſus. But the fiction is yet more extravagant, by the poet's placing it ſtill more diſtant near the Fortunate Iſlands. But what is impoſſible for veſſels to effect, that are as ſwift as birds, and can ſail with the rapidity of a thought? *Euſtathius.*

But then is the poet juſtifiable for relating ſuch incredible amplifications? It may be anſwered, if he had put theſe extravagancies into the mouth of Ulyſſes, he had been unpardonable, but they ſuit well with the character of Alcinous: they let Ulyſſes into his diſpoſition, and he appears to be ignorant, credulous, and oſtentatious. This was neceſſary, that Ulyſſes might know how to adapt himſelf to his humour, and engage his aſſiſtance; and this he actually brings about by raiſing his wonder and eſteem by ſtories, that could not fail to pleaſe ſuch an ignorant and credulous perſon as Alcinous.

Ver. 423. *The prayer of Ulyſſes.*] It is obſervable, that Ulyſſes makes no reply directly to the obliging propoſition which the king made concerning his daughter. A refuſal might have been diſadvantageous to his preſent circumſtances, yet an anſwer is implied in this prayer, which ſhews the impatience he has to return to his country, and the gratitude he feels for his promiſes to effect it: and conſequently it diſcovers that he has no intententions of ſettling with his daughter amongſt the Phæacians. *Dacier.*

Wide

Wide o'er the world Alcinous' glory ſhine!
Let fame be his, and ah! my country mine!
Meantime Arete, for the hour of reſt
Ordains the fleecy couch, and cov'ring veſt:
Bids her fair train the purple quilts prepare,
And the thick carpets ſpread with buſy care.
With torches blazing in their hands they paſt,
And finiſh'd all their queen's command with haſte:
Then gave the ſignal to the willing gueſt:
He roſe with pleaſure, and retir'd to reſt.
There, ſoft-extended, to th' murm'ring ſound
Of the high porch, Ulyſſes ſleeps perfound!
Within, releas'd from cares Alcinous lies;
And faſt beſide, were clos'd Arete's eyes.

Ver. 437, 438. *The laſt lines.*] It may ſeem ſomewhat extraordinary, that Alcinous and his queen who have been deſcribed as patterns of conjugal happineſs ſhould ſleep in diſtinct beds. Jupiter and Juno, as Dacier obſerves from the firſt of the Iliad, have the ſame bed. Perhaps the poet deſigned to ſhew the luxury and falſe delicacy of thoſe too happy Phæacians, who lived in ſuch ſoftneſs that they ſhunned every thing that might prove troubleſome or incommodious.

This book takes up no longer time than the evening of the thirty ſecond day.

THE

THE ODYSSEY.

*BOOK VIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Alcinous calls a council, in which it is resolved to transport Ulysses into his country. After which splendid entertainments are made, where the celebrated musician and poet Demodocus plays and sings to the guests. They next proceed to the games, the race, the wrestling, discus, &c where Ulysses casts a prodigious length, to the admiration of all the spectators. They return again to the banquet, and Demodocus sings the loves of Mars and Venus. Ulysses, after a compliment to the poet, desires him to sing the introduction of the wooden horse into troy; which subject provoking his tears, Alcinous enquires of his guest, his name, parentage, and fortunes.

NOW fair Aurora lifts her golden ray,
And all the ruddy orient flames with day:

Alcinous

* This book has been more severely censured by the critics than any in the whole Odyssey: it may therefore be thought necessary to lay before the reader what may be offered in the poet's vindication.

Scaliger in his Poetics is very warm against it. Demodocus, observes that critic, sings the lust of the gods (fœditates) at the feast of Alcinous. And Bossu, though he vindicates the poet, remarks that we meet with some offensive passages in Homer, and instances in the adultery of Mars and Venus.

To know (says Aristotle in his Art of Poetry) whether a thing be well or ill spoken, we must not only examine the thing whether it

Alcinous, and the chief, with dawning light,
Roſe inſtant from the ſlumbers of the night;

Then

it be good or ill, but we muſt alſo have regard to him that ſpeaks or acts, and to the perſon to whom the poet addreſſes; for the character of the perſon who ſpeaks, and of him to whom he ſpeaks, makes that to be good, which would not come well from the mouth of any other perſon. It is not on this account we vindicate Homer with reſpect to the immorality that is found in the fable of the adultery of Mars and Venus: we muſt conſider that it is neither the poet, nor his hero, that recites that ſtory: but a Phæacian ſings it to Phæacians, a ſoft effeminate people, at a feſtival. Beſides, it is allowable even in grave and moral writings to introduce vicious perſons, who deſpiſe the gods; and is not the poet obliged to adapt his poetry to the characters of ſuch perſons? And had it not been an abſurdity in him to have given us a philoſophical or moral ſong before a people who would be pleaſed with nothing but gaiety and effeminacy? The moral that we are to draw from this ſtory is, that an idle and ſoft courſe of life is the ſource of all criminal pleaſures; and that thoſe perſons who lead ſuch lives, are generally pleaſed to hear ſuch ſtories, as make their betters partakers in the ſame vices. This relation of Homer is a uſeful leſſon to them who deſire to live virtuouſly; and it teaches, that if we would not be guilty of ſuch vices, we muſt avoid ſuch a method of life as inevitably leads to the practice of them.

Rapin attacks this book on another ſide, and blames it not for its immorality, but lowneſs. Homer, ſays he, puts off that air of grandeur and majeſty which ſo properly belongs to his character; he debaſes himſelf into a droll, and ſinks into a familiar way of talking: he turns things into ridicule, by endeavouring to entertain his reader with ſomething pleaſant and diverting: for inſtance, in the eighth book of the Odyſſey, he entertains the gods with a comedy, ſome of whom he makes buffoons: Mars and Venus are introduced upon the ſtage, taken in a net laid by Vulcan, contrary to the gravity which is ſo eſſential to epic poetry.

It muſt be granted, that the gods are here painted in colours unworthy of deities, yet ſtill with propriety, if we reſpect the ſpectators, who are ignorant, debauched Phæacians. Homer was obliged to draw them, not according to his own idea of the gods, but according to the wild fancies of the Phæacians. The poet is not at liberty to aſcribe the wiſdom of a Socrates to Alcinous: he muſt

follow

Then to the council-ſeat they bend their way,
And fill the ſhining thrones along the bay.
Meanwhile Minerva, in her guardian care,
Shoots from the ſtary vault thro' fields of air;
In form, a herald of the king ſhe flies
From peer to peer, and thus inceſſant cries
Nobles and chiefs who rule Phæacia's ſtates,
The king in council your attendance waits:
A prince of form divine your aid implores,
O'er unknown ſeas arriv'd from unknown ſhores.

She

follow nature, and, like a painter, he may draw deities or monſters, and introduce, as he pleaſes, either vicious or virtuous characters, provided he always makes them of a piece, conſiſtent with their firſt repreſentation.

This rule of Ariſtotle, in general, vindicates Homer, and it is neceſſary to carry it in our minds, becauſe it ought to be applied to all incidents that relate to the Phæacians, in the ſequel of the Odyſſey.

Ver. 6. *And fill the ſhining thrones along the bay.*] This place of council was between the two ports, where the temple of Neptune ſtood; probably, like that in the ſecond book, open to the air.

Ver. 9. *In form, a herald——*] I may be aſked what occaſion there is to introduce a goddeſs, to perform an action that might have been as well executed by a real herald? Euſtathius obſerves, that this Minerva is either fame, which informs the Phæacians that a ſtranger of uncommon figure is arrived, and upon this report they aſſemble; or it implies, that this aſſembly was made by the wiſdom of the peers, and conſequently a poet may aſcribe it to the goddeſs of wiſdom, it being the effect of her inſpiration.

The poet by the introduction of a deity warns us, that ſomething of importance is to ſucceed; this is to be uſhered in with ſolemnity, and conſequently the appearance of Minerva in this place is not unneceſſary: the action of importance to be deſcribed is no leſs than the change of the fortunes of Ulyſſes; it is from this aſſembly that his affairs take a new turn, and haſten to a happy reeſtabliſhment.

Ver. 13. *A prince of form divine——*] Minerva ſpeaks thus in favour of Ulyſſes, to excite the curioſity of the Phæacians: and indeed the ſhort ſpeech is excellently adapted to this purpoſe. They

were

She ſpoke, and ſudden with tumultuous ſounds
Of thronging multitudes the ſhore rebounds:
At once the ſeats they fill: and ev'ry eye
Gaz'd, as before ſome brother of the ſky.
Pallas, with grace divine his form improves,
More high he treads, and more inlarge'd he moves:
She ſheds celeſtial bloom, regard to draw;
And gives a dignity of mien, to awe;
With ſtrength, the future prize of fame to play,
And gather all the honours of the day.
Then from his glitt'ring throne Alcinous roſe:
Attend, he cry'd, while we our will diſcloſe.

Your

were fond of ſtrangers: the goddeſs therefore tells them, that a ſtranger is arrived of a godlike appearance. They admired outward ſhow, he is therefore deſcribed as a man of extraordinary beauty, and Minerva for this reaſon immediately improves it. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 19. *Pallas with grace divine his form improves.*] This circumſtance has been repeated ſeveral times almoſt in the ſame words, ſince the beginning of the Odyſſey. I cannot be of opinion that ſuch repetitions are beauties. In any other poet, they might have been thought to proceed from a poverty of invention, though certainly not in Homer, in whom there is rather a ſuperfluity than barrenneſs. Perhaps having once ſaid a thing well, he deſpaired of improving it, and ſo repeated it: or perhaps he intended to inculcate this truth, that all our accompliſhments, as beauty, ſtrength, &c. are the gifts of the gods; and being willing to fix it upon the mind, he dwells upon it, and inſerts it in many places. Here indeed it has a particular propriety, as it is a circumſtance that firſt engages the Phæacians in the favour of Ulyſſes: his beauty was his firſt recommendation, and conſequently the poet with great judgement ſets his hero off to the beſt advantage, it being an incident from which he dates all his future happineſs; and therefore to be inſiſted upon with a particular ſolemnity.

Ver. 25. *From his glitt'ring throne Alcinous roſe.*] It might be expected that Ulyſſes, upon whoſe account alone Alcinous calls this aſſembly, ſhould have made his condition known, and ſpoken himſelf to the Phæacians; whereas he appears upon the ſtage as a mute perſon, and the multitude departs intirely ignorant of his

name

Your preſent aid this god-like ſtranger craves,
Toſt by rude tempeſt thro' a war of waves;
Perhaps from realms that view the riſing day,
Or nations ſubject to the weſtern ray.
Then grant, what here all ſons of woe obtain;
(For here affliction never pleads in vain:)
Be choſen youths prepar'd, expert to try
The vaſt profound, and bid the veſſel fly:
Lanch the tall bark, and order ev'ry oar;
Then in our court indulge the genial hour.
Inſtant, you ſailors, to this taſk attend;
Swift to the palace, all ye peers aſcend;
Let none to ſtrangers honours due diſclaim:
Be there Demodocus, the bard of fame,
Taught by the gods to pleaſe, when high he ſings
The vocal lay, reſponſive to the ſtrings.

Thus

name and fortunes. It may be anſwered, that this was not a proper time for a fuller diſcovery, the poet defers it till Ulyſſes had diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the games, and fully raiſed their curioſity. It is for the ſame reaſon that Ulyſſes is ſilent; if he had ſpoken, he could not have avoided to let them into the knowledge of his condition, but the contrary method is greatly for his advantage, and aſſures him of ſucceſs from the recommendation of a king.

But there is another, and perhaps a better reaſon, to be given for this ſilence of Ulyſſes: the poet reſerves the whole ſtory of his ſufferings for an entire and uninterrupted narration; if he had now made any diſcovery, he muſt afterwards either have fallen into tautology, or broken the thread of the relation, ſo that it would not have been of a piece, but wanted continuity. Beſides, it comes with more weight at once, than if it had been made at ſeveral times, and conſequently makes a deeper impreſſion upon the memory and paſſion of the auditors.

Ver. 41. *Taught by the gods to pleaſe*——] Homer here inſinuates that all good and great qualities are the gifts of God. He ſhews us likewiſe, that muſic was conſtantly made uſe of in the courts of all the oriental princes; we have ſeen Phemius in Ithaca, a ſecond in Lacedæmon with Menelaus, and Demodocus here with Alcinous.

Thus ſpoke the prince: the attending peers obey,
In ſtate they move; Alcinous leads the way:
Swift to Demodocus the herald flies,
At once the ſailors to their charge ariſe:
They lanch the veſſel, and unfurl the ſails,
And ſtretch the ſwelling canvas to the gales;
Then to the palace move: A gath'ring throng,
Youth, and white age, tumultuous pour along:
Now all acceſſes to the dome are fill'd;
Eight boars, the choiceſt of the herd, are kill'd:
Two beeves, twelve fatlings from the flock they bring
To crown the feaſt; ſo wills the bounteous king.
The herald now arrives, and guides along
The ſacred maſter of celeſtial ſong:
Dear to the muſe! who gave his days to flow
With mighty bleſſings, mix'd with mighty woe:
With

The Hebrews were likewiſe of remarkable ſkill in muſic; every one knows what effect the harp of David had upon the ſpirit of Saul. Solomon tells us, that he ſought out ſinging men and ſinging women to entertain him like theſe in Homer, at the time of feaſting: thus another oriental writer compares muſic at feaſts to an emerald incloſed in gold; "as a ſigner of an emerald ſet in a "work of gold, ſo is the melody of muſic with pleaſant wine." Ecclus xxxii. 6. *Dacier.*

Ver. 57. *Dear to the muſe! who gave his days to flow*
With mighty bleſſings, mix'd with mighty woe.]

It has been generally thought that Homer repreſents himſelf in the perſon of Demodocus; and Dacier imagines that this paſſage gave occaſion to the ancients to believe that Homer was blind. But that he really was blind is teſtified by himſelf in his hymn to Apollo, which Thucydides aſſerts to be the genuine production of Homer, and quotes it as ſuch in his hiſtory.

Ὦ κοῦραι, τίς δ' ὑμμιν ἀνὴρ, ἠδίστος ἀοιδῶν,
Ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται; ᾧ τῶ τέρπεσθε μάλιστα;
Ὑμεῖς δ' εὖ μάλα πᾶσαι ὑποκρίνασθε, ἀφ' ὑμέων
Τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ ——————

With clouds of darkneſs quench'd his viſual ray,
But gave him ſkill to raiſe the lofty lay.
High on a radiant throne ſublime in ſtate,
Encircled by huge multitudes, he ſat:
With ſilver ſhone the throne; his lyre well ſtrung
To rapturous ſounds, at hand Pontonous hung:
Before his ſeat a poliſh'd table ſhine,
And a full goblet foams with gen'rous wines:
His food a herald bore: and now they fed;
And now the rage of craving hunger fled.
Then fir'd by all the muſe aloud he ſings
The mighty deeds of demigods and kings:
From that fierce wrath the noble ſong aroſe,
That made Ulyſſes and Achilles foes:

That is, "O virgins, if any perſon aſks you who is he, the moſt pleaſing of all poets, who frequents this place, and who is he "who moſt delights you? reply, he is a blind man, &c." It is true, as Euſtathius obſerves, that there are many features in the two poets that bear a great reſemblance; Demodocus ſings divinely, the ſame is true of Homer; Demodocus ſings the adventures of the Greeks before Troy, ſo does Homer in his Iliad.

If this be true, it muſt be allowed that Homer has found out a way of commending himſelf very artfully: had he ſpoken plainly, he had been extravagantly vain; but by this indirect way of praiſe, the reader is at liberty to apply it either ſolely to Demodocus, or obliquely to Homer.

It is remarkable, that Homer takes a very extraordinary care of Demodocus his brother poet, and introduces him as a perſon of great diſtinction. He calls him in this book the hero Demodocus: he places him on a throne ſtudded with ſilver, and gives him an herald for his attendant; nor is he leſs careful to provide for his entertainment, he has a particular table, and a capacious bowl ſet before him to drink as often as he had a mind, as the original expreſſes it. Some merry wits have turned the laſt circumſtance into raillery, and inſinuate, that Homer in this place, as well as in the former, means himſelf in the perſon of Demodocus; an intimation, that he would not be diſpleaſed to meet with the like hoſpitality.

How

How o'er the feaſt they doom the fall of Troy;
The ſtern debate Atrides hears with joy:
For heav'n foretold the conteſt, when he trod
The marble threſhold of the Delphic god,
Curious to learn the counſels of the ſky,
E'er yet he loos'd the rage of war on Troy.
Touch'd at the ſong, Ulyſſes ſtraight reſign'd
To ſoft affliction all his manly mind:

Before

Ver. 79. *Touch'd at the ſong*——] Many objections may be made againſt this relation; it may ſeem to offend againſt probability, and appears ſomewhat incredible, that Demodocus ſhould thus luckily pitch upon the war of Troy for the ſubject of his ſong, and ſtill more happily upon the deeds of Ulyſſes; for inſtance, a man may die of an apoplexy, this is probable; but that this ſhould happen juſt when the poet has occaſion for it, is in ſome degree incredible. But this objection will ceaſe, if we conſider not only that the war of Troy was the greateſt event of thoſe ages, and conſequently might be the common ſubject of entertainment; but alſo that it is not Homer or Demodocus who relates the ſtory, but the muſe who inſpires it; Homer ſeveral times in this book aſcribes the ſong to immediate inſpiration; and this ſupernatural aſſiſtance reconciles it to human probability, and the ſtory becomes credible when it is ſuppoſed to be related by a deity. Ariſtotle in his Poetics commends this conduct as artful and judicious; Alcinous, ſays he, invites Ulyſſes to an entertainment to divert him, where Demodocus ſings his actions, at which he cannot refrain from tears, which Alcinous perceives, and this brings about the diſcovery of Ulyſſes.

It may further be objected, that a ſufficient cauſe for this violence of tears is not apparent; for why ſhould Ulyſſes weep to hear his own brave atchievements, eſpecially when nothing calamitous is recited? This indeed would be improbable, if that were the whole of what the poet ſung: but Homer only gives us the heads of the ſong, a few ſketches of a larger draught, and leaves ſomething to be filled up by the imagination of the reader. Thus for inſtance, the words of Demodocus recalled to the mind of Ulyſſes all the hardſhips he had undergone during a ten years war, all the ſcenes of horror he had beheld, and the loſs and ſufferings of all his friends. And no doubt he might weep even for the calamities

Before his eyes the purple veſt he drew,
Induſtrious to conceal the falling dew:
But when the muſic paus'd, he ceas'd to ſhed
The flowing tear, and rais'd his drooping head:
And lifting to the gods a goblet crown'd,
He pour'd a pure libation to the ground.
Tranſported with the ſong, the liſt'ning train
Again with loud applauſe demand the ſtrain:
Again Ulyſſes veil'd his penſive head,
Again unmann'd a ſhow'r of ſorrow ſhed:
Conceal'd he wept: the king obſerv'd alone
The ſilent tear, and heard the ſecret groan:
Then to the bard aloud: O ceaſe to ſing,
Dumb be thy voice, and mute th' harmonious ſtring;
Enough the feaſt has pleas'd, enough the pow'r
Of heav'nly ſong has crown'd the genial hour!
Inceſſant in the games your ſtrength diſplay,
Conteſt, ye brave, the honours of the day!
That pleas'd th' admiring ſtranger may proclaim
In diſtant regions the Phæacian fame:
None wield the gauntlet with ſo dire a ſway,
Or ſwifter in the race devour the way;

he brought upon Troy; an ingenuous nature cannot be inſenſible when any of its own ſpecies ſuffers; the Trojans were his enemies, but ſtill they were men, and compaſſion is due even to unfortunate enemies. I doubt not but it will be allowed, that there is here ſufficient cauſe to draw tears from a hero, unleſs a hero muſt be ſuppoſed to be diveſted of humanity.

Ver. 101. *None wield the gauntlet with ſo dire a ſway.*] Euſtathius aſks how Alcinous could make ſuch an aſſertion, and give the preference to his people before all nations, when he neither knew, nor was known to, any heroes out of his own iſland? He anſwers that he ſpeaks like a Phæacian, with oſtentation and vanity; beſides it is natural for all people to form, not illaudibly, too favourable a judgement of their own country: and this agrees with the character of the Phæacians in a more particular manner, who called themſelves ἀθάνατοι, and the favourites of the gods.

None

None in the leap ſpring with ſo ſtrong a bound,
Or firmer, in the wreſtling, preſs the ground.
Thus ſpoke the king; the attending peers obey;
In ſtate they move, Alcinous leads the way:
His golden lyre Demodocus unſtrung,
High on a column in the palace hung:
And guided by a herald's guardian cares,
Majeſtic to the liſts of fame repairs.
Now ſwarms the populace; a countleſs throng,
Youth and hoar age; and man drives man along:
The games begin: Ambitious of the prize,
Acroneus, Thoon, and Eretmeus riſe;
The prize Ocyalus and Prymneus claim,
Anchialus and Ponteus, chiefs of fame:
There Proreus, Nautes, Eratreus appear,
And fam'd Amphialus, Polyneus' heir:
Euryalus, like Mars terrific, roſe,
When clad in wrath he withers hoſts of foes:
Naubolides with grace unequall'd ſhone,
Or equall'd by Laodamas alone.
With theſe came forth Ambaſineus the ſtrong;
And three brave ſons, from great Alcinous ſprung.

Ver. 113. *The games*——] Euſtathius remarks, that Homer very judiciously paſſes over theſe games in a few lines, having in the Iliad exhauſted that ſubject; he there enlarged upon them, becauſe they were eſſential ornaments it being neceſſary that Patroclus ſhould be honoured by his friend with the utmoſt ſolemnity. Here they are only introduced occaſionally, and therefore the poet haſtens to things more requiſite, and carries on the thread of his ſtory. But then it may be aſked, why are they mentioned at all, and what do they contribute to the re-eſtabliſhment of Ulyſſes? It is evident that they are not without an happy effect; they give Ulyſſes an opportunity to ſignalize his character, to engage the king and the peers in his favour, and this induces them to convey him to his own country, which is one of the moſt material incidents in the whole Odyſſey.

Range'd in a line the ready racers ſtand,
Start from the goal and vaniſh o'er the ſtrand:
Swift as on wings of wind upborn they fly,
And driſts of riſing duſt involve the ſky:
Before the reſt, what ſpace the hinds allow
Between the mule and ox, from plough to plough;
Clytoneus ſprung: he wing'd the rapid way,
And bore th' unrivall'd honours of the day.
With fierce embrace the brawny wreſtlers join;
The conqueſt, great Euryalus, is thine.
Amphialus ſprung forward with a bound,
Superiour in the leap, a length of ground:
From Elatreus' ſtrong arm the diſcus flies,
And ſings with unmatch'd force along the ſkies.
And Laodam whirls high, with dreadful ſway,
The gloves of death, victorious in the fray.
While thus the peerage in the games contends,
In act to ſpeak, Laodamas aſcends:
O friends, he cries, the ſtranger ſeems well ſkill'd
To try th' illuſtrious labours of the field:
I deem him brave; then grant the brave man's claim,
Invite the hero to his ſhare of fame.
What nervous arms he boaſts! how firm his tread!
His limbs how turn'd! how broad his ſhoulders ſpread!
By age unbroke! —— but all-conſuming care
Deſtroys perhaps the ſtrength that time would ſpare:
Dire

Ver. 149. *By age unbroke!*] It in the original literally, "he "wants not youth:" this is ſpoken according to appearance only, for Ulyſſes muſt be ſuppoſed to be above forty, having ſpent twenty years in the wars of Troy, and in his return to his country. It is true Heſiod calls a perſon a youth, ἀϊζηὸν, who was forty years of age, but this muſt be underſtood with ſome allowance, unleſs we ſuppoſe that the life of man was longer in the times of Heſiod, than in theſe latter ages; the contrary of which appears from many places in Homer, where the ſhortneſs of man's life is compared

Dire is the ocean, dread in all its forms!
Man muſt decay, when man contends with ſtorms,
  Well haſt thou ſpoke, (Euryalus replies)
Thine is the gueſt, invite him thou to riſe.
Swift as the word advancing from the croud
He made obeiſance, and thus ſpoke aloud.
  Vouchſafes the rev'rend ſtranger to diſplay
His manly worth, and ſhare the glorious day?
Father, ariſe! for thee thy port proclaims
Expert to conquer in the ſolemn games.
To fame ariſe! for what more fame can yield
Than the ſwift race, or conflict of the field?
Steal from corroding care one tranſient day,
To glory give the ſpace thou haſt to ſtay;
Short is the time, and lo! ev'n now the gales
Call thee aboard and ſtretch the ſwelling ſails:
  To whom with ſighs Ulyſſes gave reply:
Ah why th' ill-ſuiting paſtime muſt I try?
To gloomy care my thoughts alone are free;
Ill the gay ſports with troubled hearts agree:

pared to the leaves of trees, &c. But what the poet here relates is very juſtifiable, for the youth which Ulyſſes appears to have, proceeds from Minerva; it is not a natural quality, but conferred by the immediate operation of a goddeſs.

This ſpeech concludes with an addreſs of great beauty; Laodamas invites Ulyſſes to act in the games, yet at the ſame time furniſhes him with a decent excuſe, to decline the invitation if it be againſt his inclinations; ſhould he refuſe, he imputes the refuſal to his calamities, not to any want of ſkill, or perſonal inability.

Ver. 167. ——————*Ulyſſes gave reply.*] Theſe are the firſt words ſpoken by Ulyſſes before the Phæacians; and we cannot but be curious to know how he makes his addreſs to engage a people, in whom he has no perſonal intereſt, in his favour. His ſpeech is excellently adapted to this purpoſe: he repreſents himſelf as a ſuppliant to the king and all the aſſembly; and all ſuppliants being eſteemed ſacred, he at once makes it a duty in all the aſſembly to protect him; if they refuſe to aſſiſt him, they become guilty of no leſs a crime, than a violation of the laws of hoſpitality.

Sad

Sad from my natal hour my days have ran,
A much-afflicted, much-enduring man!
Who ſuppliant to the king and peers, implores
A ſpeedy voyage to his native ſhores.
Wide wanders, Laodam, thy erring tongue,
The ſports of glory to the brave belong,
(Retorts Euryalus:) he boaſts no claim
Among the great, unlike the ſons of fame.
A wand'ring merchant he frequents the main,
Some mean ſea-farer in purſuit of gain;
Studious of freight, in naval trade well ſkill'd,
But dreads th' athletic labours of the field.
Incens'd Ulyſſes with a frown replies,
O forward to proclaim thy ſoul unwiſe!
With partial hands the gods their gifts diſpenſe;
Some greatly think, ſome ſpeak with manly ſenſe;
Here heav'n an elegance of form denies,
But wiſdom the defect of form ſupplies:
This man with energy of thought controuls,
And ſteals with modeſt violence our ſouls,
He ſpeaks reſervedly, but he ſpeaks with force,
Nor can one word be change'd but for a worſe;
In public more than mortal he appears,
And as he moves the gazing croud reveres.
While others beauteous as th' ætherial kind,
The nobler portion want, a knowing mind.
In outward ſhow heav'n gives thee to excell,
But heav'n denies the praiſe of thinking well,
I'll bear the brave a rude ungovern'd tongue,
And, youth, my gen'rous ſoul reſents the wrong:
Skill'd in heroic exerciſe, I claim
A poſt of honour with the ſons of fame:

Such

Ver. 201. *Skill'd in heroic exerciſe, I claim*
A poſt of honour with the ſons of fame.]
It may be thought that Ulyſſes, both here and in his ſubſequent ſpeech,

Such was my boaſt, while vigour crown'd my days,
Now care ſurrounds me, and my force decays;
Inur'd a melancholy part to bear,
In ſcenes of death, by tempeſt and by war.
Yet thus by woes impair'd, no more I wave
To prove the hero. — Slander ſtings the brave.
Then ſtriding forward with a furious bound,
He wrench'd a rocky fragment from the ground,
By far more pond'rous and more huge by far,
Than what Phæacia's ſons diſcharge'd in air.
Fierce from his arm th' enormous load he flings;
Sonorous thro' the ſhaded air it ſings;
Couch'd to the earth, tempeſtuous as it flies,
The crowd gaze upwards while it cleaves the ſkies.
Beyond all marks, with many a giddy round
Down ruſhing, it up-turns a hill of ground.
That inſtant Pallas, burſting from a cloud,
Fix'd a diſtinguiſh'd mark, and cry'd aloud.
Ev'n he who ſightleſs wants his viſual ray,
May by his touch alone award the day:
Thy ſignal throw tranſcends the utmoſt bound
Of ev'ry champion by a length of ground:
Securely bid the ſtrongeſt of the train
Ariſe to throw: the ſtrongeſt throws in vain.

ſpeech, is too oſtentatious, and that he dwells more than modeſty allows upon his own accompliſhments: but ſelf-praiſe is ſometimes no fault. Plutarch has wrote a diſſertation, how a man may praiſe himſelf without envy: what Ulyſſes here ſpeaks is not a juſtification. Perſons in diſtreſs, ſays Plutarch, may ſpeak of themſelves with dignity: it ſhews a greatneſs of ſoul, and that they bear up againſt the ſtorms of fortune with bravery: they have too much courage to fly to pity and commiſeration, which betray deſpair and an hopeleſs condition: ſuch a man ſtruggling with ill fortune ſhews himſelf a champion, and if by a bravery of ſpeech he transforms himſelf from miſerable and abject, into bold and noble, he is not to be cenſured as vain or obſtinate, but great and invincible.

She ſpoke; and momentary mounts the ſky:
The friendly voice Ulyſſes hears with joy;
Then thus aloud, (elate with decent pride)
Riſe ye Phæacians, try your force, he cry'd;
If with this throw the ſtrongeſt caſter vye,
Still further ſtill, I bid the diſcus fly.
Stand forth, ye champions, who the gauntlet wield,
Or you, the ſwifteſt racers of the field!
Stand forth, ye wreſtlers, who theſe paſtimes grace!
I wield the gauntlet, and I run the race.
In ſuch heroic games I yield to none,
Or yield to brave Laodamas alone:
Shall I with brave Laodamas contend?
A friend is ſacred, and I ſtile him friend.
Ungen'rous were the man, and baſe of heart,
Who takes the kind, and pays th' ungrateful part;

Ver. 139. *Shall I with brave Laodamas contend?*
A friend is ſacred, and I ſtile him friend.]

Nothing can be more artful than this addreſs of Ulyſſes; he finds a way in the middle of a bold challenge, to ſecure himſelf of a powerful advocate, by paying an ingenious and laudable deference to his friend. But it may be aſked if decency be obſerved, and ought Ulyſſes to challenge the father Alcinous, (for he ſpeaks univerſally), and yet except his ſon Laodamas, eſpecially when Alcinous was more properly his friend than Laodamas? And why ſhould he be excepted, rather than the other brothers? Spondanus anſwers, that the two brothers are included in the perſon of Laodamas, they all have the ſame relation to Ulyſſes, as being equally a ſuppliant to them all, and conſequently claim the ſame exemption from this challenge as Laodamas; and Alcinous is not concerned in it: he is the judge and arbitrator of the games (not a candidate), like Achilles in the Iliad. But why is Laodamas named in particular? He was the elder brother, and Ulyſſes might therefore be conſigned to his care in particular, by the right due to his ſeniority; beſides, he might be the nobleſt perſonage, having conquered his antagoniſt at the gauntlet, which was the moſt dangerous, and conſequently the moſt honourable exerciſe, and therefore Ulyſſes might pay him peculiar honours. *Spondanus.*

Chiefly

Chiefly the man, in foreign realms confin'd,
Baſe to his friend, to his own intereſt blind:
All, all your heroes, I this day defy;
Give me a man, that we our might may try.
Expert in ev'ry art, I boaſt the ſkill
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;
Should a whole hoſt at once diſcharge the bow,
My well aim'd ſhaft with death prevents the foe:
Alone ſuperiour in the field of Troy,
Great Philoctetes taught the ſhaft to fly.
From all the ſons of earth unrivall'd praiſe
I juſtly claim; but yield to better days,
To thoſe fam'd days when great Alcides roſe,
And Eurytus, who bade the gods be foes:
(Vain Eurytus, whoſe art became his crime,
Swept from the earth he periſh'd in his prime;

Sudden

Ver. 249. *Should a whole hoſt at once diſcharge the bow,*
My well aim'd ſhaft with death prevents the foe.]
There is an ambiguity in the original, and it may imply either, that if Ulyſſes and his friends were at the ſame time to aim their arrows againſt an enemy, his arrow would fly with more certainty and expedition than that of his companions: or that if his enemies had bent all their bows at once againſt him, yet his ſhaft would reach his adverſary before they could diſcharge their arrows. Euſtathius follows the former, Dacier the latter interpretation. And certainly the latter argues the greater intrepidity and preſence of mind: it ſhews Ulyſſes in the extremity of danger capable of acting with calmneſs and ſerenity, and ſhooting with the ſame certainty and ſteadineſs, though multitudes of enemies endanger his life. I have followed this explication, as it is nobler, and ſhews Ulyſſes to be a conſummate hero.

Ver. 257. *Vain Eurytus* ————] This Eurytus was king of Oechalia, famous for his ſkill in archery; he propoſed his daughter Iole in marriage to any perſon that could conquer him at the exerciſe of the bow. Later writers differ from Homer, as Euſtathius obſerves, concerning Eurytus. They write that Hercules overcame him, and he denying his daughter, was ſlain, and his daughter made captive by Hercules? whereas Homer writes that he was killed

Sudden th' irreamable way he trod,
Who boldy durſt defy the bowyer-god.)
In fighting fields as far the ſpear I throw,
As flies an arrow from the well drawn bow.
Sole in the race the conteſt I decline,
Stiff are my weary joints, and I reſign.
By ſtorms and hunger worn: age well may fail,
When ſtorms and hunger both at once aſſail.
Abaſh'd,

killed by Apollo, that is, died a ſudden death, according to the import of that expreſſion. The ancients differ much about Occhalia; ſome place it in Eubœa, and ſome in Meſſenia, of which opinion is Pauſanias. But Homer in the Iliad places it in Theſſaly: for he mentions with it Tricca and Ithomè, which, as Dacier obſerves, were cities of Theſſaly.

Ver. 263. *Sole in the race the conteſt I decline*] This is directly contrary to his challenge in the beginning of the ſpeech, where he mentions the race amongſt the other games. How then is this difference to be reconciled? Very naturally. Ulyſſes ſpeaks with a generous warmth, and is tranſported with anger in the beginning of his oration: here the heat of it is cooled, and conſequently reaſon takes place, and he has time to reflect, that a man ſo diſabled by calamities is not an equal match for a younger and leſs fatigued antagoniſt. This is an exact repreſentation of human nature; when our paſſions remit, the vehemence of our ſpeech remits; at firſt he ſpeaks like a man in anger, here like the wiſe Ulyſſes.

It is obſervable, that Ulyſſes all along mainains a decency and reverence towards the gods, even while his anger ſeems to be maſter over his reaſon; he gives Eurytus as an example of the juſt vengeance of heaven, and ſhews himſelf in a very oppoſite light: he is ſo far from contending with the gods, that he allows himſelf to be inferior to ſome other heroes: an inſtance of modeſty.

Ver. 265. ——— *Age well may fail,*
When ſtorms and hunger ————]

This paſſage apppears to me to refer to the late ſtorms and ſhipwreck, and the long abſtinence Ulyſſes ſuffered in ſailing from Calypſo to the Phæacian iſland; for when Nauſicaa found him, he was almoſt dead with hunger, as appears from the ſixth of the Odyſſey. Dacier is of a different opinion, and thinks it relates to his abſtinence and ſhipwreck upon his leaving Circe, before he came

Abaſh'd, the numbers hear the god like man,
'Till great Alcinous mildly thus began.
Well haſt thou ſpoke, and well thy gen'rous tongue
With decent pride refutes a public wrong:
Warm are thy words, but warm without offence;
Fear only fools, ſecure in men of ſenſe:
Thy worth is known. Then hear our country's claim,
And bear to heroes our heroic fame;
In diſtant realms our glorious deeds diſplay,
Repeat them frequent in the genial day;
When bleſt with eaſe, thy woes and wand'rings end,
Teach them thy conſort, bid thy ſons attend;
How lov'd of Jove he crown'd our ſires with praiſe,
How we their offspring dignify our race.
Let other realms the deathful gauntlet wield,
Or boaſt the glories of th' athletic field;
We in the courſe unrivall'd ſpeed diſplay,
Or thro' cærulean billows plough the way,
To dreſs, to dance, to ſing our ſole delight,
The feaſt or bath by day, and love by night:
Riſe then ye ſkill'd in meaſures; let him bear
Your fame to men that breathe a diſtant air:
And faithful ſay, to you the pow'rs belong
To race, to ſail, to dance, to chant the ſong.
But, herald, to the palace ſwift repair,
And the ſoft lyre to grace our paſtimes bear.

to Calypſo. This ſeems very improbable; for Ulyſſes had lived ſeven years with that goddeſs in great affluence, and conſequently muſt be ſuppoſed to have recruited his loſs of ſtrength in ſo long a time, and with the particular care of a goddeſs: beſides Alcinous was acquainted with his late ſhipwreck, and his daughter Nauſicaa was in ſome degree witneſs to it: it is not therefore more probable that he ſhould refer to this latter incident, than ſpeak of a calamity that happened ſeven years paſt, to which they were intirely ſtrangers.

Swift as the word, obedient to the king,
The herald flies, the tuneful lyre to bring.
Up roſe nine ſeniors, choſen to ſurvey
The future games, the judges of the day:
With inſtant care thy mark a ſpacious round,
And level for the dance th' allotted ground;
The herald bears the lyre: intent to play,
The bard advancing meditates the lay,
Skill'd in the dance, 'till youths, a blooming band,
Graceful before the heav'nly minſtrel ſtand;
Light-bounding from the earth, at once they riſe,
Their feet half-viewleſs quiver in the ſkies:

Ver. 301. *Skill'd in the dance*————] I beg leave to tranſlate Dacier's annotations upon this paſſage, and to offer a remark upon it. This deſcription, ſays that lady, is remarkable, not becauſe the dancers moved to the ſound of the harp and the ſong; for in this there is nothing extraordinary; but in that they dance, if I may ſo expreſs it, an hiſtory; that is, by their geſtures and movements they expreſſed what the muſic of the harp and voice deſcribed, and the dance was a repreſentation of what was the ſubject of the poet's ſong. Homer only ſays they danced divinely, according to the obvious meaning of the words. I fancy Madam Dacier would have forborne her obſervation, if ſhe had reflected upon the nature of the ſong to which the Phæacians danced: it was an intrigue between Mars and Venus; and they being taken in ſome very odd poſtures, ſhe muſt allow that theſe dancers repreſented ſome very odd geſtures, (or movements as ſhe expreſſes it), if they were now dancing an hiſtory, that is, acting in their motions what was the ſubject of the ſong. But I ſubmit to the judgement of the ladies, and ſhall only add, that this is an inſtance how a critical eye can ſee ſome things in an author, that were never intended by him; though to do her juſtice, ſhe borrowed the general remark from Euſtathius.

The words μαρμαρυγὰς ϑηεῖτο ποδῶν are very expreſſive; they repreſent the quick glancings of their feet in the dance, "Motus "pedum coruſcans;" or

The glancing ſplendours as their ſandals play.

Ulyſſes

Ulyſſes gaz'd, aſtoniſh'd to ſurvey
The glancing ſplendours as their ſandals play.
Meantime the bard, alternate to the ſtrings,
The loves of Mars and Cytherea ſings;
How the ſtern god, enamour'd with her charms,
Claſp'd the gay panting goddeſs in his arms,
By bribes ſeduce'd: and how the ſun, whoſe eye
Views the broad heav'ns, diſclos'd the lawleſs joy.
Stung to the ſoul, indignant thro' the ſkies
To his black forge vindictive Vulcan flies;
Arriv'd, his ſinewy arms inceſſant place
Th' eternal anvil on the maſſy baſe
A wond'rous net he labours, to betray
The wanton lovers, as entwin'd they lay,
Indiſſolubly ſtrong! Then inſtant bears
To his immortal dome the finiſh'd ſnares.
Above, below, around, with art diſpread,
The ſure incloſure folds the genial bed;
Whoſe texture ev'n the ſearch of gods deceives,
Thin as the filmy threads the ſpider weaves.
Then, as withdrawing from the ſtary bow'rs,
He feigns a journey to the Lemnian ſhores,
His fav'rite iſle! Obſervant Mars deſcries
His wiſh'd receſs, and to the goddeſs flies;
He glows, he burns, the fair-hair'd queen of love
Deſcends ſmooth gliding from the courts of Jove,
Gay blooming in full charms: her hand he preſt
With eager joy, and with a ſigh addreſt.
Come my belov'd! and taſte the ſoft delights:
Come, to repoſe the genial bed invites:
Thy abſent ſpouſe, neglectful of thy charms,
Prefers his barb'rous Sintians to thy arms!

Then,

Ver. 336. *Prefers his barb'rous Sintians to thy arms.*] The Sintians were the inhabitants of Lemnos, by origin Thracians: Homer calls them barbarous of ſpeech, becauſe their language was a cor-

Then, nothing loath, th' enamour'd fair he led,
And ſunk tranſported on the conſcious bed.
Down ruſh'd the toils, inwrapping as they lay,
The careleſs lovers in their wanton play:
In vain they ſtrive, th' intangling ſnares deny
(Inextricably firm) the pow'r to fly:
Warn'd by the god who ſheds the golden day,
Stern Vulcan homeward treads the ſtarry way:
Arriv'd, he ſees, he grieves, with rage he burns;
Full horrible he roars, his voice all heav'n returns:
O Jove, he cry'd, oh all ye pow'rs above,
See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love!
Me, aukward me, ſhe ſcorns; and yields her charms
To that fair letcher, the ſtrong god of arms.
If I am lame, that ſtain my natal hour
By fate impos'd; ſuch me my parent bore:

ruption of the Greek, Aſiatic, and Thracian. But there is a concealed raillery in the expreſſion, and Mars ridicules the ill taſte of Vulcan for leaving ſo beautiful a goddeſs to viſit his rude and barbarous Sintians. The poet calls Lemnos the favourite iſle of Vulcan; this alludes to the ſubterraneous fires frequent in that iſland, and he is feigned to have his forge there, as the god of fire. This is likewiſe the reaſon why he is ſaid to fall into the iſland Lemnos when Jupiter threw him from heaven. *Dacier.*

Ver. 348. *See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love.*] The original ſeems to be corrupted; were it to be tranſlated according to the preſent editions, it muſt be, "See the ridiculous deeds of Venus." I conceive, that few huſbands, who ſhould take their ſpouſes in ſuch circumſtances would have any great appetite to laugh; neither is ſuch an interpretation conſonant to the words immediately following ἐκ ἐπιτιχλὼ. It is therefore very probable that the verſe was originally,

Δεῦθ' ἵνα ἔργ' ἀγελαστὰ καὶ ἐκ ἐπιτιχλὰ ἴδησθε.

"Come ye gods, behold the ſad and unſufferable deeds of Venus;" and this agrees with the tenour of Vulcan's behaviour in this comedy, who has not the leaſt diſpoſition to be merry with his brother deities.

Why

Why was I born? See how the wanton lies!
O ſight tormenting to an huſband's eyes!
But yet I truſt, this once ev'n Mars would fly
His fair-one's arms—he thinks her, once, too nigh.
But there remain, ye guilty, in my pow'r,
'Till Jove refunds his ſhameleſs daughter's dow'r.
Too dear I priz'd a fair enchanting face:
Beauty unchaſte is beauty in diſgrace.

Meanwhile the gods the dome of Vulcan throng,
Apollo comes, and Neptune comes along,
With theſe gay Hermes trod the ſtarry plain;
But modeſty with held the goddeſs-train.
All heav'n beholds, impriſon'd as they lie,
And unextinguiſh'd laughter ſhakes the ſky.

Then mutual, thus they ſpoke: Behold on wrong
Swift vengeance waits; and art ſubdues the ſtrong!

Ver. 358. *'Till Jove refunds his ſhameleſs daughter's dow'r.*] I doubt not but this was the uſage of antiquity: it has been obſerved that the bridegroom made preſents to the father of the bride, which were called ἕδνα; and if ſhe was afterwards falſe to his bed, this dower was reſtored by the father to the huſband. Beſides this reſtitution, there ſeems a pecuniary mulct to have been paid, as appears evident from what follows:

——— ——— The god of arms
Muſt pay the penalty for lawleſs charms.

Homer in this, as in many other places, ſeems to allude to the laws of Athens, where death was the puniſhment of adultery.

Ver. 367. ——— ——— *Beh la on wrong*
Swift vengeance waits; ——— ———]

Plutarch in his diſſertation upon reading the poets, quotes this as an inſtance of Homer's judgement, in cloſing a ludicrous ſcene with decency and inſtruction. He artfully inſerts a ſentence by which he diſcovers his own judgement, and lets the reader into the moral of his fables; by this conduct he makes even the repreſentation of evil actions uſeful, by ſhewing the ſhame and detriment they draw upon thoſe who are guilty of them.

Dwells there a god on all th' Olympian brow
More ſwift than Mars, and more than Vulcan ſlow?
Yet Vulcan conquers, and the god of arms
Muſt pay the penalty for lawleſs charms.
  Thus ſerious they: but he who gilds the ſkies,
The gay Apollo, thus to Hermes cries.
Wou'dſt thou enchain'd like Mars, oh Hermes, lie,
And bear the ſhame like Mars, to ſhare the joy?
  O envy'd ſhame! (the ſmiling youth rejoin'd)
Add thrice the chains, and thrice more firmly bind;
Gaze all ye gods, and ev'ry goddeſs gaze,
Yet eager would I bleſs the ſweet diſgrace.
  Loud laugh the reſt, ev'n Neptune laughs aloud,
Yet ſues importunate to looſe the god:
And free, he cries, oh Vulcan! free from ſhame
Thy captives; I enſure the penal claim.
  Will Neptune (Vulcan then) the faithleſs truſt?
He ſuffers who gives ſurety for th' unjuſt:
But ſay, if that lewd ſcandal of the ſky
To liberty reſtor'd, perfidious fly;
Say, wilt thou bear the mulct? He inſtant cries,
The mulct I bear, if Mars perfidious flies.
  To whom appeas'd: No more I urge delay;
When Neptune ſues, my part is to obey.

Ver. 382. *Neptune ſues to looſe the god.*] It may be aſked why Neptune in particular intereſts himſelf in the deliverance of Mars, rather than the other gods? Dacier confeſſes ſhe can find no reaſon for it; but Euſtathius is of opinion, that Homer aſcribes it to that god out of decency, and deference to his ſuperior majeſty and eminence amongſt the other deities: it is ſuitable to the character of that moſt ancient, and conſequently honourable god, to interrupt ſuch an indecent ſcene of mirth, which is not ſo becoming his perſonage, as thoſe more youthful deities Apollo and Mercury. Beſides, it agrees well with Neptune's gravity to be the firſt who is mindful of friendſhip; ſo that what is here ſaid of Neptune is not accidental, but ſpoken judiciouſly by the poet in honour of that deity.

Then

Then to his ſnares his force the god applies;
Thy burſt; and Mars to Thrace indignant flies:
To the ſoft Cyprian ſhores the goddeſs moves,
To viſit Paphos and her blooming groves,
Where to the pow'r an hundred altars riſe,
And breathing odours ſcent the balmy ſkies:
Conceal'd ſhe bathes in conſecrated bow'rs,
The graces unguents ſhed, ambroſial ſhow'rs,
Unguents that charm the gods! ſhe laſt aſſumes
Her wond'rous robes; and full the goddeſs blooms.
Thus ſung the bard: Ulyſſes hears with joy,
And loud applauſes rend the vaulted ſky.
Then to the ſports his ſons the king commands,
Each blooming youth before the monarch ſtands,
In dance unmatch'd! A wond'rous ball is brought,
(The work of Polybus, divinely wrought)
This youth with ſtrength enormous bids it fly,
And bending backward whirls it to the ſky;
His brother ſpringing with an active bound,
At diſtance intercepts it from the ground:
The ball diſmiſs'd in dance they ſkim the ſtrand,
Turn and return, and ſcarce imprint the ſand.
The aſſembly gazes with aſtoniſh'd eyes,
And ſends in ſhouts applauſes to the ſkies.
Then thus Ulyſſes: Happy king, whoſe name
The brighteſt ſhines in all the rolls of fame:

Ver. 394. ——— *Mars to Thrace indignant flies:*
To the ſoft Cyprian ſhores the goddeſs moves.]

There is a reaſon for this particularity: the Thracians were a warlike people: the poet therefore ſends the god of war thither: and the people of Cyprus being effeminate, and addicted to love and pleaſures, he feigns the receſs of the goddeſs of love to have been in that iſland. It is further obſervable, that he barely mentions the retreat of Mars, but dwells more largely upon the ſtory of Venus. The reaſon is, the Phæacians had no delight in the god of war, but the ſoft deſcription of Venus better ſuited with their inclinations. *Euſtathius.*

In

In ſubjects happy! with ſurpriſe I gaze;
Thy praiſe was juſt; their ſkill tranſcends thy praiſe.
Pleas'd with his peoples fame the monarch hears,
And thus benevolent accoſts the peers.
Since wiſdom's ſacred guidance he purſues,
Give to the ſtranger-gueſt a ſtranger's dues:
Twelve princes in our realm dominion ſhare,
O'er whom ſupreme, imperial pow'r I bear:
Bring gold, a pledge of love; a talent bring,
A veſt, a robe, and imitate your king:
Be ſwift to give; that he this night may ſhare
The ſocial feaſt of joy, with joy ſincere.
And thou, Euryalus, redeem thy wrong:
A gen'rous heart repairs a ſland'rous tongue.
Th' aſſenting peers, obedient to the king,
In haſte their heralds ſend the gifts to bring.
Then thus Euryalus: O prince, whoſe ſway
Rules this bleſt realm, repentant I obey!
Be his this ſword, whoſe blade of braſs diſplays
A ruddy gleam; whoſe hilt, a ſilver blaze;
Whoſe ivory ſheath inwrought with curious pride,
Adds graceful terror to the wearer's ſide.
He ſaid; and to his hand the ſword, conſign'd;
And if, he cry'd, my words affect thy mind,
Far from thy mind thoſe words, ye whirlwinds bear,
And ſcatter them, ye ſtorms, in empty air!
Crown, oh ye heav'ns, with joy his peaceful hours,
And grant him to his ſpouſe and native ſhores!
And bleſt be thou, my friend, Ulyſſes cries,
Crown him with ev'ry joy, ye fav'ring ſkies;
To thy calm hours continu'd peace afford,
And never, never may'ſt thou want this ſword!
He

Ver. 450. *And never, never may'ſt thou want this ſword.*] It can ſcarce be imagined how greatly this beautiful paſſage is miſrepreſented by Euſtathius. He would have it to imply, "May I never

He ſaid, and o'er his ſhoulder flung the blade.
Now o'er the earth aſcends the ev'ning ſhade:
The precious gift th' illuſtrious heralds bear,
And to the court th' embody'd peers repair.
Before the queen Alcinous' ſons unfold
The veſts, the robes, and heaps of ſhining gold;
Then to the radiant thrones they move in ſtate:
Aloft, the king in pomp imperial ſat.
Thence to the queen. O partner of our reign,
O ſole belov'd! command thy menial train
A poliſh'd cheſt and ſtately robes to bear,
And healing waters for the bath prepare:
That bath'd, our gueſt may bid his ſorrows ceaſe,
Hear the ſweet ſong, and taſte the feaſt in peace.
A bowl that flames with gold, of wond'rous frame,
Ourſelf we give, memorial of our name:
To raiſe in off'rings to almighty Jove,
And ev'ry god that tread the court above.
Inſtant the queen, obſervant of the king,
Commands her train a ſpacious vaſe to bring,
The ſpacious vaſe with ample ſtreams ſuffice,
Heap high the wood, and bid the flames ariſe.
The flames climb round it with a fierce embrace,
The ſuming waters bubble o'er the blaze.

" ver want this ſword," taking τοὶ adverbially: the preſents of enemies were reckoned fatal, Ulyſſes therefore to avert the omen, prays that he may never have occaſion to have recourſe to this ſword of Euryalus, but keep it amongſt his treaſures as a teſtimony of this reconciliation. This appears to be a very forced interpretation, and diſagreeable to the general import of the reſt of the ſentence; he addreſſes to Euryalus; to whom then can this compliment be naturally paid but to Euryalus? " Thou haſt given me a ſword, (ſays " he) may thy days be ſo peaceable as never to want it!" This is an inſtance of the polite addreſs, and the forgiving temper, of Ulyſſes.

Herſelf

Herſelf the cheſt prepares: in order roll'd
The robes, the veſts are range'd, and heaps of gold:
And adding a rich dreſs inwrought with art,
A gift expreſſive of her bounteous heart,
Thus ſpoke to Ithacus: To guard with bands
Inſolvable theſe gifts, thy care demands:
Leſt, in thy ſlumbers on the wat'ry main,
The hand of rapine make our bounty vain.
Then bending with full force, around he roll'd
A labyrinth of bands in fold on fold,
Clos'd with Circæan art. A train attends
Around the bath: the bath the king aſcends:
(Untaſted joy, ſince that diſaſtrous hour,
He ſail'd ill-fated from Calypſo's bow'r)
Where, happy as the gods that range the ſky,
He feaſted ev'ry ſenſe, with ev'ry joy.

Ver. 485. *Clos'd with Circæan art.*——] Such paſſages as theſe have more of nature than art, and are too narrative, and different from modern ways of ſpeaking, to be capable of much ornament in poetry. Euſtathius obſerves that keys were not in uſe in theſe ages, but were afterwards invented by the Lacedæmonians; but they uſed to bind their carriages with intricate knots. Thus the Gordian knot was famous in antiquity. And this knot of Ulyſſes became a proverb, to expreſs any inſolvable difficulty, ὅτῳ ὀδυσσέως δεσμὸς: this is the reaſon why he is ſaid to have learned it from Circe; it was of great eſteem amongſt the ancients, and not being capable to be untied by human art, the invention of it is aſcribed, not to a man, but to a goddeſs.

A poet would now appear ridiculous if he ſhould introduce a goddeſs only to teach a hero ſuch an art, as to tie a knot with intricacy: but we muſt not judge of what has been, from what now is; cuſtoms and arts are never at a ſtay, and conſequently the ideas of cuſtoms and arts are as changeable as thoſe arts and cuſtoms: this knot in all probability was in as high eſtimation formerly, as the fineſt watch work or machines are at this day; and were a perſon famed for an uncommon ſkill in ſuch works, it would be no abſurdity in the language of poetry, to aſcribe his knowledge in them to the aſſiſtance of a deity.

He

He bathes; the damſels with officious toil,
Shed ſweets, ſhed unguents, in a ſhow'r of oil:
Then o'er his limbs a gorgeous robe he ſpreads,
And to the feaſt magnificently treads.
Full where the dome its ſhining valves expands,
Nauſicaa blooming as a goddeſs ſtands,
With wond'ring eyes the hero ſhe ſurvey'd,
And graceful thus began the royal maid.
Hail god-like ſtranger! and when heav'n reſtores
To thy fond wiſh thy long-expected ſhores,
This ever grateful in remembrance bear,
To me thou ow'ſt, to me, the vital air.
O royal maid, Ulyſſes ſtraight returns,
Whoſe worth the ſplendours of thy race adorns,
So may dread Jove (whoſe arms in vengeance forms
The writhen bolt, and blackens heav'n with ſtorms,)
Reſtore me ſafe, thro' weary wand'rings toſt,
To my dear country's ever pleaſing coaſt,
As while the ſpirit in this boſom glows,
To thee, my goddeſs, I addreſs my vows;

Ver. 510. *To thee, my goddeſs, I addreſs my vows.*] This may ſeem an extravagant compliment, eſpecially in the mouth of the wiſe Ulyſſes, and rather profane than polite. Dacier commends it as the higheſt piece of addreſs and gallantry; but perhaps it may want explication to reconcile it to decency. Ulyſſes only ſpeaks comparatively, and with relation to that one action of her ſaving his life: "As therefore, (ſays he), I owe my thanks to the hea-"vens for giving me life originally, ſo I ought to pay my thanks "to thee for preſerving it; thou haſt been to me as a deity. To "preſerve a life, is in one ſenſe to give it." If this appears not to ſoften the expreſſion ſufficiently, it may be aſcribed to an over-flow of gratitude in the generous diſpoſition of Ulyſſes; he is ſo touched with the memory of her benevolence and protection, that his ſoul labours for an expreſſion great enough to repreſent it, and no wonder if in this ſtruggle of thought, his words fly out into an exceſſive but laudable boldneſs.

My

My life, thy gift I boaſt! He ſaid, and ſat,
Faſt by Alcinous on a throne of ſtate.
Now each partakes the feaſt, the wine prepares,
Portions the food, and each his portion ſhares.
The bard an herald guides: the gazing throng
Pay low obeiſance as he moves along:
Beneath a ſculptur'd arch he ſits enthron'd,
The peers encircling form an awful round.
Then from the chine, Ulyſſes carves with art
Delicious food, an honorary part;
This, let the maſter of the lyre receive,
A pledge of love! 'tis all a wretch can give.
Lives there a man beneath the ſpacious ſkies,
Who ſacred honours to the bard denies?
The muſe the bard inſpires, exalts his mind;
The muſe indulgent loves th' harmonious kind:
The herald to his hand the charge conveys,
Not fond of flatt'ry, nor unpleas'd with praiſe.
When now the rage of hunger was allay'd,
Thus to the lyriſt wiſe Ulyſſes ſaid,
O more than man! thy ſoul the muſe inſpires,
Or Pœbus animates with all his fires:

For

Ver. 519. ——*From the chine Ulyſſes carves with art.*] Were this literally to be tranſlated, it would be, that Ulyſſes cut a piece from the chine of the white-toothed boar, round which there was much fat. This looks like burleſque to a perſon unacquainted with the uſages of antiquity: but it was the higheſt honour that could be paid to Demodocus. The greateſt heroes in the Iliad are thus rewarded after victory, and it was eſteemed an equivalent for all dangers. So that what Ulyſſes here offers to the poet, is offered out of a particular regard and honour to his poetry.

Ver. 531. ——*Thy ſoul the muſe inſpires,*
Or Phœbus animates with all his fires.]

Ulyſſes here aſcribes the ſongs of Demodocus to immediate inſpiration; and Apollo is made the patron of the poets, as Euſtathius obſerves, becauſe he is the god of prophecy. He adds, that Homer here again repreſents himſelf in the perſon of Demodocus: it

For who by Phœbus uninform'd, could know
The woe of Greece, and ſing ſo well the woe?
Juſt to the tale, as preſent at the fray,
Or taught the labours of the dreadful day!
The ſong recalls paſt horrours to my eyes,
And bids proud Ilion from her aſhes riſe.
Once more harmonious ſtrike the ſounding ſtring,
Th' Epæan fabric, fram'd by Pallas, ſing:
How ſtern Ulyſſes, furious to deſtroy,
With latent heroes ſack'd imperial Troy.
If faithful thou record the tale of fame,
The god himſelf inſpires thy breaſt with flame:
And mine ſhall be the taſk, henceforth to raiſe
In ev'ry land the monument of praiſe.
  Full of the god he rais'd his lofty ſtrain,
How the Greeks ruſh'd tumultuous to the main:
How blazing tents illumin'd half the ſkies,
While from the ſhores the winged navy flies:
How ev'n in Ilion's walls, in deathful bands,
Came the ſtern Greeks by Troy's aſſiſting hands:
All Troy up-heav'd the ſteed; of diff'ring mind,
Various the Trojans counſell'd; part conſign'd

'is he who wrote the war of Troy with as much faithfulneſs, as if he had been preſent at it; it is he who had little or no aſſiſtance from former relations of that ſtory, and conſequently receives it from Apollo and the muſes. This is a ſecret but artful inſinuation, that we are not to look upon the Iliad as all fiction and fable, but in general as a real hiſtory, related with as much certainty as if the poet had been preſent at thoſe memorable actions.

Plutarch in his chapter of reading poems admires the conduct of Homer with relation to Ulyſſes: he diverts Demodocus from idle fables, and gives him a noble theme, the deſtruction of Troy. Such ſubjects ſuit well with the ſage character of Ulyſſes. It is for the ſame reaſon that he here paſſes over in ſilence the amour of Mars and Venus, and commends the ſong at the beginning of this book, concerning the contention of the worthies before Troy: an inſtruction, what ſongs a wiſe man ought to hear, and that poets ſhould recite nothing but what may be heard by a wiſe man.

The monſter to the ſword, part ſentence gave
To plunge it headlong in the whelming wave;
Th' unwiſe award to lodge it in the tow'rs,
An off'ring ſacred to th' immortal pow'rs:
Th' unwiſe prevail, they lodge it in the walls,
And by the gods decree proud Ilion falls;
Deſtruction enters in the treach'rous wood,
And vengeful ſlaughter, fierce for human blood.
He ſung the Greeks ſtern-iſſuing from the ſteed,
How Ilion burns, how all her fathers bleed:
How to thy dome, Deiphobus! aſcends
The Spartan king; how Ithacus attends,
(Horrid as Mars) and how with dire alarms
He fights, ſubdues: for Pallas ſtrings his arms.
Thus while he ſung, Ulyſſes' griefs renew,
Tears bathe his cheeks, and tears the ground bedew:
As ſome fond matron views in mortal fight
Her huſband falling in his country's right:

Ver. 571. *As ſome fond matron* ———] This is undoubtedly a very moving and beautiful compariſon; but it may be aſked if it be proper to compare ſo great a hero as Ulyſſes to a woman, the weakneſs of whoſe ſex juſtifies her tears? Beſides ſhe appears to have a ſufficient cauſe for her ſorrows, as being under the greateſt calamities; but why ſhould Ulyſſes weep? Nothing but his valour and ſucceſs is recorded, and why ſhould this be an occaſion of ſorrow? Euſtathius replies, that they who think that Ulyſſes is compared to the matron, miſtake the point of the compariſon: whereas the tears alone of Ulyſſes are intended to be compared to the tears of the matron. It is the ſorrow of the two perſons, not the perſons themſelves, that is repreſented in the compariſon. But there appears no ſufficient cauſe for the tears of Ulyſſes; this objection would not have been made, if the ſubject of the ſong had been conſidered; it ſets before his eyes all the calamities of a long war, all the ſcenes of ſlaughter of friends and enemies that he had beheld in it: it is alſo to be remembered, that we have only the abridgement of the ſong, and yet we ſee ſpectacles of horror, blood, and commiſeration. Tears diſcover a tender, not an abject ſpirit. Achilles is not leſs a hero for weeping over the aſhes of Patroclus, nor Ulyſſes for lamenting the calamities and deaths of thouſands of his friends.

Frantic

Frantic thro' claſhing ſwords ſhe runs, ſhe flies,
As ghaſtly pale he groans, and faints, and dies;
Cloſe to his breaſt ſhe grovels on the ground,
And bathes with floods of tears the gaping wound;
She cries, ſhe ſhrieks; the fierce inſulting foe
Relentleſs mocks her violence of woe:
To chains condemn'd, as wildly ſhe deplores;
A widow, and a ſlave on foreign ſhores.
So from the ſluices of Ulyſſes' eyes
Faſt fell the tears, and ſighs ſucceeded ſighs:
Conceal'd he griev'd: the king obſerv'd alone
The ſilent tear, and heard the ſecret groan:
Then to the bard aloud: O ceaſe to ſing,
Dumb be thy voice, and mute the tuneful ſtring:
To ev'ry note his tears reſponſive flow,
And his great heart heaves with tumultuous woe;
Thy lay too deeply moves: then ceaſe the lay,
And o'er the banquet ev'ry heart be gay:
This ſocial right demands: for him the ſails
Floating in air, invite th' impelling gales:
His are the gifts of love: the wiſe and good
Receive the ſtranger as a brother's blood.
But, friend, diſcover faithful what I crave,
Artful concealment ill becomes the brave:
Say what thy birth, and what the name you bore,
Impos'd by parents in the natal hour?
(For from the natal hour diſtinctive names,
One common right, the great and lowly claims:)
Say from what city, from what regions toſt,
And what inhabitants thoſe regions boaſt?
So ſhalt thou inſtant reach the realm aſſign'd,
In wond'rous ſhips ſelf-mov'd, inſtinct with mind;
No

Ver. 604. *In wond'rous ſhips ſelf-mov'd, inſtinct with mind.*] There is not a paſſage that more outrages all the rules of credibility than the deſcription of theſe ſhips of Alcinous. The poet inſerts theſe

No helm ſecures their courſe, no pilot guides;
Like man intelligent, they plough the tides,
Conſcious of every coaſt, and every bay,
That lies beneath the ſun's all ſeeing ray;
Tho' clouds and darkneſs veil th' encumber'd ſky,
Fearleſs thro' darkneſs and thro' clouds they fly:
Tho' tempeſts rage, tho' rolls the ſwelling main,
The ſeas may roll, the tempeſts rage in vain;
Ev'n the ſtern god that o'er the waves preſides,
Safe as they paſs, and ſafe repaſs the tides,
With fury burns; while careleſs they convey
Promiſcuous every gueſt to every bay.
Theſe ears have heard my royal ſire diſcloſe
A dreadful ſtory big with future woes,
How Neptune rage'd, and how, by his command,
Firm rooted in the ſurge a ſhip ſhould ſtand

wonders only to ſhew the great dexterity of the Phæacians in navigation; and indeed it was neceſſary to be very full in the deſcription of their ſkill, who were to convey Ulyſſes home in deſpight of the very god of the ocean. It is for the ſame reaſon that they are deſcribed as ſailing almoſt inviſibly, to eſcape the notice of that god. Antiquity animated every thing in poetry; thus Argo is ſaid to have had a maſt made of Dodonæan oak, endued with the faculty of ſpeech. But this is defending one abſurdity, by inſtancing in a fable equally abſurd; all that can be ſaid in defence of it is, that ſuch extravagant fables were believed, at leaſt by the vulgar, in former ages; and conſequently might be introduced without blame in poetry; if ſo, by whom could a boaſt of this nature be better made, than by a vain Phæacian? Beſides theſe extravagancies let Ulyſſes into the humour of the Phæacians, and in the following books he adapts his ſtory to it, and returns fable for fable. It muſt likewiſe certainly be a great encouragement to Ulyſſes to find himſelf in ſuch hands as could ſo eaſily reſtore him to his country: for it was natural to conclude, that though Alcinous was guilty of great amplification, yet that his ſubjects were very expert navigators.

Ver. 619. ——————*How, by his command,*
Firm rooted in the ſurge a ſhip ſhould ſtand.]

The ancients, as Euſtathius obſerves, mark theſe verſes with an obeliſk

A monument of wrath: how mound on mound
Should bury theſe proud tow'rs beneath the ground.
But this the gods my fruſtrate or fulfill,
As ſuits the purpoſe of th' eternal will.
But ſay thro' what waſte regions haſt thou ſtray'd,
What cuſtoms noted, and what coaſts ſurvey'd?
Poſſeſt by wild barbarians fierce in arms,
Or men, whoſe boſom tender pity warms?

obeliſk and aſteriſm. The obeliſk ſhewed that they judged what relates to the oracle was miſplaced; the aſteriſm denoted that they thought the verſes very beautiful. For they thought it not probable that Alcinous would have called to memory this prediction and the menace of Neptune, and yet perſiſted to conduct to his own country the enemy of that deity: whereas if this oracle be ſuppoſed to be forgotten by Alcinous, (as it will, if theſe verſes be taken away), then there will be an appearance of truth, that he who was a friend to all ſtrangers, ſhould be perſuaded to land ſo great and worthy a hero as Ulyſſes in his own dominions, and therefore they reject them to the thirteenth of the Odyſſey. But, as Euſtathius obſerves, Alcinous immediately ſubjoins,

> But this the gods may fruſtrate or fulfill,
> As ſuits the purpoſe of th' eternal will.

And therefore the verſes may be very proper in this book, for Alcinous believes that the gods might be prevailed upon not to fulfill this denunciation. It has been likewiſe remarked that the conduct of Alcinous is very juſtifiable: the Phæacians had been warned by an oracle, that an evil threatened them for the care they ſhould ſhew to a ſtranger: yet they forbear not to perform an act of piety to Ulyſſes, being perſuaded that men ought to do their duty, and truſt the iſſue to the goodneſs of the gods. This will ſeem to be more probable, if we remember Alcinous is ignorant that Ulyſſes is the perſon intended by the prediction, ſo that he is not guilty of a voluntary oppoſition to the gods, but really acts with piety in aſſiſting his gueſt, and only complies with the common laws of hoſpitality.

It is but a conjecture, yet it is not without probability, that there was a rock which looked like a veſſel, in the entrance of the haven of the Phæacians, the fable may be built upon this foundation, and, becauſe it was environed by the ocean, the transformation might be aſcribed to the god of it.

Say why the fate of Troy awak'd thy cares,
Why heav'd thy boſom, and why flow'd thy tears? 630
Juſt are the ways of heav'n: from heav'n proceed
The woes of man; heav'n doom'd the Greeks to bleed,
A theme of future ſong! Say then if ſlain
Some dear-lov'd brother preſs'd the Phrygian plain?
Or bled ſome friend, who bore a brother's part, 635
And claim'd by merit, not by blood, the heart?

Ver. 635. *Or bled ſome friend, who bore a brother's part,*
And claim'd by merit, not by blood, the heart?]

This excellent ſentence of Homer at once guides us in the choice, and inſtructs us in the regard, that is to be paid to the perſon of a friend. If it be lawful to judge of a man from his writings, Homer had a ſoul ſuſceptible of real friendſhip, and was a lover of ſincerity. It would be endleſs to take notice of every caſual inſtruction inſerted in the Odyſſey; but ſuch ſentences ſhew Homer to have been a man of an amiable character as well as excellent in poetry: the great abhorrence he had of lies cannot be more ſtrongly expreſt than in thoſe two paſſages of the ninth Iliad, and in the fourteenth Odyſſey: in the firſt of which he makes the man of the greateſt ſoul, Achilles, bear teſtimony to his averſion of them; and in the latter declares, that "the pooreſt man, though "compelled by the utmoſt neceſſity, ought not to ſtoop to ſuch a "practice." In this place he ſhews that worth creates a kind of relation, and that we are to look upon a worthy friend as a brother.

This book takes up the whole thirty-third day, and part of the evening: for the council opens in the morning, and at ſun-ſetting the Phæacians return to the palace from the games; after which Ulyſſes bathes and ſups, and ſpends ſome time of the evening in diſcourſing, and hearing the ſongs of Demodocus. Then Alcinous requeſts him to relate his own ſtory, which he begins in the next book, and continues it through the four ſubſequent books of the Odyſſey.

THE

THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK IX.

THE ARGUMENT.

The adventures of the Cicons, Lotophagi, and Cyclops.

Ulyſſes begins the relation of his adventures; how after the deſtruction of Troy, he with his companions made an incurſion on the Cicons, by whom they were repulſed; and meeting with a ſtorm, were driven to the coaſt of Lotophagi. From thence they ſailed to the land of the Cyclops, whoſe manners and ſituation are particularly characteriſed. The giant Polyphemus and his cave deſcribed; the uſage Ulyſſes and his companions met with there; and laſtly, the method and artifice by which he eſcaped.

THEN thus Ulyſſes. Thou, whom firſt in ſway,
As firſt in virtue, theſe thy realms obey;
How

* As we are now come to the epiſodical part of the Odyſſey, it may be thought neceſſary to ſpeak ſomething of the nature of epiſodes.

As the action of the epic is always one, entire, and great action; ſo the moſt trivial epiſodes muſt be ſo interwoven with it, as to be neceſſary parts, or convenient, as Mr. Dryden obſerves, to carry on the main deſign; either ſo neceſſary, as without them the poem muſt be imperfect, or ſo convenient, that no others can be imagined more ſuitable to the place in which they ſtand: there is nothing to be left void in a firm building, even the cavities ought not

How ſweet the products of a peaceful reign!
The heav'n-taught poet, and enchanting ſtrain;
The well-fill'd palace, the perpetual feaſt,
A land rejoicing, and a people bleſt!

How

not to be filled up with rubbiſh deſtructive to the ſtrength of it, but with materials of the ſame kind, though of leſs pieces, and fitted to the main fabric.

Ariſtotle tells us, that what is comprehended in the firſt platform of the fable is proper, the reſt is epiſode: let us examine the Odyſſey by this rule: the ground work of the poem is, a prince abſent from his country ſeveral years, Neptune hinders his return, yet at laſt he breaks through all obſtacles, and returns, where he finds great diſorders, the authors of which he puniſhes, and reſtores peace to his kingdoms. This is all that is eſſential to the model, this the poet is not at liberty to change; this is ſo neceſſary, that any alteration deſtroys the deſign, ſpoils the fable, and makes another poem of it. But epiſodes are changeable; for inſtance, though it was neceſſary that Ulyſſes, being abſent, ſhould ſpend ſeveral years with foreign princes, yet it was not neceſſary that one of theſe princes ſhould be Antiphates, another Alcinous; or that Circe or Calypſo ſhould be the perſons who entertained him: it was in the poet's choice to have changed theſe perſons and ſtates, without changing his deſign or fable. Thus though theſe adventures or epiſodes become parts of the ſubject after they are choſen, yet they are not originally eſſential to the ſubject. But in what ſenſe then are they neceſſary? The reply is, Since the abſence of Ulyſſes was abſolutely neceſſary, it follows that, not being at home, he muſt be in ſome other country: and therefore, though the poet was at liberty to make uſe of none of theſe particular adventures, yet it was not in his choice to make uſe of none at all; if theſe had been omitted, he muſt have ſubſtituted others, or elſe he would have omitted part of the matter contained in his model, viz. the adventures of a perſon long abſent from his country; and the poem would have been defective. So that epiſodes are not actions, but parts of an action. It is in poetry, as Ariſtotle obſerves, as in painting; a painter puts many actions into one piece, but they all conſpire to form one entire and perfect action: a poet likewiſe uſes many epiſodes, but all thoſe epiſodes taken ſeparately finiſh nothing, they are but imperfect members, which altogether

make

How goodly ſeems it, ever to employ
Man's ſocial days in union and in joy;
The plenteous board high-heap'd with cates divine,
And o'er the foaming bowl the laughing wine!
  Amid theſe joys, why ſeeks thy mind to know
Th' unhappy ſeries of a wand'rer's woe;
Remembrance ſad, whoſe image to review,
Alas! muſt open all my wounds anew?
And oh, what firſt, what laſt ſhall I relate,
Of woes unnumber'd ſent by heav'n and fate?
  Know firſt the man (tho' now a wretch diſtreſt)
Who hopes thee, monarch, for his future gueſt.

make one and the ſame action, like the parts of a human body, they all conſpire to conſtitute the whole man.

In a word, the epiſodes of Homer are complete epiſodes; they are proper to the ſubject, becauſe they are drawn from the ground of the fable; they are ſo joined to the principal action, that one is the neceſſary conſequence of the other, either truly or probably: and laſtly, they are imperfect members which do not make a complete and finiſhed body; for an epiſode that makes a complete action, cannot be part of a principal action; as is eſſential to all epiſodes.

An epiſode may then be defined, "A neceſſary part of an acti-"on, extended by probable circumſtances." They are part of an action, for they are not added to the principal action, but only dilate and amplify that principal action: thus the poet, to ſhew the ſufferings of Ulyſſes, brings in the ſeveral epiſodes of Polyphemus, Scylla, the Syrens, &c. But why ſhould the words, "extended "by probable circumſtances," enter the definition? Becauſe the ſufferings of Ulyſſes are propoſed in the model of the fable in general only, but by relating the circumſtances, the manner how he ſuffered is diſcovered; and this connects it with the principal action, and ſhews very evidently the neceſſary relation the epiſode bears to the main deſign of the Odyſſey. What I have ſaid, I hope, plainly diſcovers the difference between the epiſodic and principal action, as well as the nature of epiſodes. See Boſſu more largely upon this ſubject.

Behold

Behold Ulyſſes! no ignoble name,
Earth ſounds my wiſdom, and high heav'n my fame.
My native ſoil is Ithaca the fair,
Where high Neritus waves his woods in air:
Dulichium, Samè, and Zacynthus crown'd
With ſhady mountains, ſpreads their iſles around.
(Theſe to the north and night's dark regions run,
Thoſe to Aurora and the riſing ſun.)
Low lies ours iſle, yet bleſt in fruitful ſtores;
Strong are her ſons, tho' rocky are her ſhores;
And none, ah none ſo lovely to my ſight,
Of all the lands that heav'n o'erſpreads with light!
In Vain Calypſo long conſtrain'd my ſtay,
With ſweet, reluctant, amorous delay;

With

Ver. 19. *Behold Ulyſſes!*——] The poet begins with declaring the name of Ulyſſes: the Phæacians had already been acquainted with it by the ſong of Demodocus, and therefore it could not fail of raiſing the utmoſt attention and curioſity (as Euſtathius obſerves), of the whole aſſembly, to hear the ſtory of ſo great a hero. Perhaps it may be thought that Ulyſſes is oſtentatious, and ſpeaks of himſelf too favourably; but the neceſſity of it will appear, if we conſider that Ulyſſes had nothing but his perſonal qualifications to engage the Phæacians in his favour. It was therefore requiſite to make thoſe qualifications known, and this was not poſſible to be done but by his own relation, he being a ſtranger among ſtrangers. Beſides, he ſpeaks before a vain-glorious people, who thought even boaſting no fault.

Ver. 31. *In vain Calypſo*——] Euſtathius obſerves, that Ulyſſes repeats his refuſal of the goddeſs Calypſo and Circe in the ſame words, to ſhew Alcinous, by a ſecret denial, that he could not be induced to ſtay from his country, or marry his daughter: he calls Circe Δολόεσσα, becauſe ſhe is ſkilled in magical incantations: he deſcribes Ithaca with all its inconveniencies, to convince Alcinous of his veracity, and that he will not deceive him in other circumſtances, when he gives ſo diſadvantageous a character of a country for which he expreſſes ſo great a fondneſs; and laſtly, in relating the death of his friends, he ſeems to be guilty of a tautology, in θανάτοιο τε μόρου τε. But Aulus Gellius gives us the reaſon

With all her charms as vainly Circe ſtrove,
And added magic, to ſecure my love.
In pomps or joys, the palace or the grot,
My country's image never was forgot,
My abſent parents roſe before my ſight,
And diſtant lay contentment and delight.
Hear then the woes, which mighty Jove ordain'd
To wait my paſſage from the Trojan land,
The winds from Ilion to the Cicons' ſhore,
Beneath cold Iſmarus, our veſſels bore.

reaſon of it, "Atrocitatem rei bis idem dicendo auxit, inculcavit-"que, non igitur illa ejuſdem ſignificationis repetitio, ignava et "frigida videri debet."

Ver. 41. ——*To the Cicons' ſhore.*] Here is the natural and true beginning of the Odyſſey, which comprehends all the ſufferings of Ulyſſes, and these ſufferings take their date immediately after his leaving the ſhores of Troy; from that moment he endeavours to return to his own country, and all the difficulties he meets with in returning, enter into the ſubject of the poem. But it may then be aſked, if the Odyſſey does not take up the ſpace of ten years, ſince Ulyſſes waſtes ſo many in his return; and is not this contrary to the nature of epic poetry, which is agreed muſt not at the longeſt exceed the duration of one year, or rather campaign? The anſwer is, the poet lets all the time paſs which exceeds the bounds of epic action, before he opens the poem; thus Ulyſſes ſpends ſome time before he arrives at the iſland of Circe; with her he continues one year, and ſeven with Calypſo; he begins artificially at the concluſion of the action, and finds an opportunity to repeat the moſt conſiderable and neceſſary incidents which preceded the opening of the Odyſſey; by this method he reduces the duration of it into leſs compaſs than the ſpace of two months. This conduct is abſolutely neceſſary, for, from the time that the poet introduces his hero upon the ſtage, he ought to continue his action to the very end of it, that he may never afterwards appear idle or out of motion: this is verified in Ulyſſes; from the moment he leaves the iſland of Ogygia to the death of the ſuitors, he is never out of view, never idle; he is always either in action, or preparing for it, till he is reſtabliſhed in his dominions If the poet had followed the natural order of the action, he, like Lucan, would not have wrote an epic poem, but an hiſtory in verſe.

We

We boldly landed on the hoſtile place,
And ſack'd the city, and deſtroy'd the race,
Their wives made captive, their poſſeſſions ſhar'd,
And ev'ry ſoldier found a like reward.
I then adviſ'd to fly; not ſo the reſt,
Who ſtaid to revel, and prolong the feaſt:
The fatted ſheep and ſable bulls they ſlay,
And bowls fly round, and riot waſtes the day.
Meantime the Cicons, to their holds retir'd,
Call on the Cicons, with new fury fir'd;
With early morn the gather'd country ſwarms,
And all the continent is bright with arms:
Thick as the budding leaves or riſing flow'rs
O'erſpread the land, when ſpring deſcends in ſhow'rs:
All expert ſoldiers, ſkill'd on foot to dare,
Or from the bounding courſer urge the war.
Now fortune changes (ſo the fates ordain)
Our hour was come to taſte our ſhare of pain.
Cloſe at the ſhips the bloody fight began,
Wounded they wound, and man expires on man.
Long as the morning ſun increaſing bright
O'er heav'ns pure azure ſpread the growing light,
Promiſcuous death the form of war confounds,
Each adverſe battle gor'd with equal wounds:
But when his ev'ning wheels o'erhung the main,
Then conqueſt crown'd the fierce Ciconian train.
Six brave companions from each ſhip we loſt,
The reſt eſcape in haſte, and quit the coaſt.

With

Ver. 44. *And ſack'd the city* ——] The poet aſſigns no reaſon why Ulyſſes deſtroys this city of the Ciconians, but we may learn from the Iliad that they were auxiliaries of Troy, book the ſecond.

With great Euphemus the Ciconians move,
Sprung from Trœzenian Cœus, lov'd of Jove.

And therefore Ulyſſes aſſaults them as enemies. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 69. *Six brave companions from each ſhip we loſt.*] This is one

With ſails outſpread we fly th' unequal ſtrife,
Sad for their loſs, but joyful of our life.
Yet as we fled, our fellows rites we pay'd,
And thrice we call'd on each unhappy ſhade.
Meanwhile the god, whoſe hand the thunder forms,
Drives clouds on clouds, and blackens heav'n with ſtorms:
Wide o'er the waſte the rage of Boreas ſweeps,
And night ruſh'd headlong on the ſhaded deeps.
Now here, now there, the giddy ſhips are borne,
And all the rattling ſhrouds in fragments torn.
We furl'd the ſail, we ply'd the lab'ring oar,
Took down our maſts, and row'd our ſhips to ſhore.
Two tedious days and two long nights we lay,
O'erwatch'd and batter'd in the naked bay.
But the third morning when Aurora brings,
We rear the maſts, we ſpread the convas wings;
Rrefreſh'd, and careleſs on the deck reclin'd,
We ſit, and truſt the pilot and the wind.

of the paſſages which fell under the cenſure of Zoilus; it is very improbable, ſays that critic, that each veſſel ſhould loſe ſix men exactly; this ſeems a too equal diſtribution to be true, conſidering the chance of battle. But it has been anſwered, that Ulyſſes had twelve veſſels, and that in this engagement he loſt ſeventy-two ſoldiers; ſo that the meaning is, that taking the total of his loſs, and dividing it equally through the whole fleet, he found it amounted exactly to ſix men in every veſſel. This will appear to be a true ſolution, if we remember that there was a neceſſity to ſupply the loſs of any one ſhip out of the others that had ſuffered leſs: ſo that though one veſſel loſt more than the reſt, yet being recruited equally from the reſt of the fleet, there would be exactly ſix men wanting in every veſſel. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 74. *And thrice we call'd on each unhappy ſhade.*] This paſſage preſerves a piece of antiquity: it was the cuſtom of the Grecians, when their friends died upon foreign ſhores, to uſe this ceremony of recalling their ſouls, though they obtained not their bodies, believing by this method, that they tranſported them to their own country.

Then to my native country had I ſail'd:
But the cape doubled, adverſe winds prevail'd.
Strong was the tide, which by the northern blaſt
Impell'd, our veſſels on Cythera caſt.
Nine days our fleet th' uncertain tempeſt bore
Far in wide ocean, and from ſight of ſhore:
The tenth we touch'd by various errours toſt,
The land of Lotos, and the flow'ry coaſt.
We climb'd the beach, and ſprings of water found,
Then ſpread our haſty banquet on the ground.
Three men were ſent, deputed from the crew,
(An herald one) the dubious coaſt to view,
And learn what habitants poſſeſt the place.
They went, and found an hoſpitable race;
Not prone to ill, nor ſtrange to foreign gueſt,
They eat, they drink, and nature gives the feaſt;
The trees around them, all their fruit produce;
Lotos, the name; divine, nectarious juice!
(Thence call'd Lotophagi) which whoſo taſtes,
Inſatiate riots in the ſweet repaſts,
Nor other home nor other care intends,
But quits his houſe, his country, and his friends:

Ver. 100. *An herald one.*] The reaſon why the poet mentions the herald in particular, is becauſe his office was ſacred; and by the common law of nations his perſon inviolable: Ulyſſes therefore joins an herald in this commiſſion, for the greater ſecurity of thoſe whom he ſends to ſearch the country. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 114. *The charm once taſted, had return'd no more.*] It muſt be confeſſed, that the effects of this Lotos are extraordinary, and ſeem fabulous; how then ſhall we reconcile the relation to credibility? the foundation of it might perhaps be no more than this? the companions of Ulyſſes might be willing to ſettle amongſt theſe Lotophagi, being won by the pleaſure of the place, and tired with a life of danger and the perils of ſeas. Or perhaps it is only an allegory, to teach us that thoſe, who indulge themſelves in pleaſures, are with difficulty withdrawn from them, and want an Ulyſſes to lead them by a kind of violence into the paths of glory.

The

The three we ſent, from off th' inchanting ground
We dragg'd reluctant, and by force we bound:
The reſt in haſte forſook the pleaſing ſhore,
Or, the charm taſted, had return'd no more.
Now place'd in order on their banks, they ſweep
The ſea's ſmooth face, and cleave the hoary deep;
With heavy hearts we labour thro' the tide,
To coaſts unknown, and oceans yet untry'd.
The land of Cyclops firſt; a ſavage kind,
Nor tam'd by manners, nor by laws confin'd:
Untaught to plant, to turn the glebe and ſow;
They all their products to free nature owe.
The ſoil untill'd a ready harveſt yields,
With wheat and barley wave the golden fields,
Spontaneous wines from weighty cluſters pour,
And Jove deſcends in each prolific ſhow'r.

Ver. 119. *The land of Cyclops firſt.*] Homer here confines himſelf to the true geography of Sicily: for, in reality, a ſhip may eaſily ſail in one day from the land of the Lotophagi to Sicily: theſe Cyclops inhabited the weſtern part of that iſland, about Drepane and Lilybæum. Bochart ſhews us, that they derive their name from the place of their inhabitation; for the Phæacians call them Chek-lub, by contraction for Chek-lelub; that is, the gulf of Lilybæum, or the men who dwell about the Lilybæan gulf. The Greeks (who underſtood not the Phæacian language), formed the word Cyclop, from Chek-lub, from the affinity of ſound; which word in the Greek language, ſignifying a circular eye, might give occaſion to fable, that they had but one large round eye in the middle of their foreheads. *Dacier.*

What Homer ſpeaks of the fertility of Sicily, is agreeable to hiſtory: it was called anciently "Romani imperii horreum." Pliny, lib. x. cap. 10. writes, that the Leontine plains bear for every grain of corn, an hundred. Diodorus Siculus relates in his hiſtory what Homer ſpeaks in poetry, that the fields of Leontium yield wheat without the culture of the huſbandman: he was an eye-witneſs, being a native of the iſland. From hence in general it may be obſerved, that where-ever we can trace Homer, we find, if not hiſtoric truth, yet the reſemblance of it; that is, as plain truth as can be related without converting his poem into an hiſtory.

By theſe no ſtatutes and no rights are known,
No council held, no monarch fills the throne,
But high on hills or airy cliffs they dwell,
Or deep in caves whoſe entrance leads to hell.
Each rules his race, his neighbour not his care,
Heedleſs of others, to his own ſevere.
Oppos'd to the Cyclopean coaſts, there lay
An iſle, whoſe hills their ſubject fields ſurvey;
Its name Lachæa, crown'd with many a grove,
Where ſavage goats thro' pathleſs thickets rove:
No needy mortals here, with hunger bold,
Or wretched hunters, thro' the wint'ry cold
Purſue their flight; but leave them ſafe to bound
From hill to hill, o'er all the deſert ground.
Nor knows the ſoil to feed the fleecy care,
Or feels the labours of the crooked ſhare
But uninhabited, untill'd, unſown
It lies, and breeds the bleating goat alone.
For there no veſſel with vermilion prore,
Or bark of traffic, glides from ſhore to ſhore;
The rugged race of ſavages, unſkill'd
The ſeas to traverſe, or the ſhips to build,

Ver. 129. *But high on hills —— Or deep in caves.*] This is ſaid, to give an air of probability to the revenge which Ulyſſes takes upon this giant, and indeed to the whole ſtory. He deſcribes his ſolitary life, to ſhew that he was utterly deſtitute of aſſiſtance; and it is for the ſame reaſon, continues Euſtathius, that the poet relates that he left his fleet under a deſart neighbouring iſland, namely to make it probable, that the Cyclops could not ſeize it, or purſue Ulyſſes, having no ſhipping.

Ver. 134. *An iſle, whoſe hills,* &c.] This little iſle is now called Æguſa, which ſignifies the iſle of goats. Cluverius deſcribes it after the manner of Homer, "Prata mollia, et irrigua, ſolum fer-"tile, portum commodum, fontes limpidos." It is not certain whether the poet gives any name to it; perhaps it had not received any in thoſe ages, it being without inhabitants; though ſome take λάχεια for a proper name, as is obſerved by Euſtathius.

Gaze

Gaze on the coaſt, nor cultivate the ſoil;
Unlearn'd in all th' induſtrious arts of toil.
Yet here all products and all plants abound,
Sprung from the fruitful genius of the ground;
Fields waving high with heavy crops are ſeen,
And vines that flouriſh in eternal green,
Rrefreſhing meads along the murm'ring main,
And fountains ſtreaming down the fruitful plain.
A port there is, inclos'd on either ſide,
Where ſhips may reſt, unanchor'd and unty'd;
'Till the glad mariners inclines to ſail,
And the ſea whitens with the riſing gale.
High at its head, from out the cavern'd rock
In living rills a guſhing fountain broke:
Around it, and above, for ever green
The buſhing alders form'd a ſhady ſcene.
Hither ſome fav'ring god beyond our thought,
Thro' all-ſurrounding ſhade our navy brought;
For gloomy night deſcended on the main,
Nor glimmer'd Phœbe in th' ethereal plain:
But all unſeen the clouded iſland lay,
And all unſeen the ſurge and rolling ſea,
'Till ſafe we anchor'd in the ſhelter'd bay:
Our ſails we gather'd, caſt our cables o'er,
And ſlept ſecure along the ſandy ſhore.
Soon as again the roſy morning ſhone,
Reveal'd the landſchape and the ſcene unknown,

Ver. 165. *Hither ſome fav'ring god*——] This circumſtance is inſerted with great judgement; Ulyſſes otherwiſe might have landed in Sicily, and fallen into the hands of the Cyclopeans, and conſequently been loſt inevitably: he therefore piouſly aſcribes his ſafety, by being driven upon this deſolate iſland, to the guidance of the gods; he uſes it as a retreat, leaves his navy there, and paſſes over into Sicily in one ſingle veſſel, undiſcovered by theſe gigantic ſavages; this reconciles the relation to probability, and renders his eſcape practicable. *Euſtathius.*

With wonder ſeiz'd we view the pleaſing ground,
And walk delighted, and expatiate round.
Rous'd by the woodland nymphs, at early dawn,
The mountain goats came bounding o'er the lawn:
In haſte our fellows to the ſhips repair,
For arms and weapons of the ſilvan war;
Straight in three ſquadrons all our crew we part,
And bend the bow, or wing the miſſile dart;
The bounteous gods afford a copious prey,
And nine fat goats each veſſel bears away:
The royal bark had ten. Our ſhips compleat
We thus ſupply'd, (for twelve were all the fleet).
Here, till the ſetting ſun roll'd down the light,
We ſat indulging in the genial rite!
Nor wines were wanting; thoſe from ample jars
We drain'd the prize of our Ciconian wars.
The land of Cyclops lay in proſpect near;
The voice of goats and bleating flocks we hear,
And from their mountains riſing ſmokes appear.
Now ſunk the ſun, and darkneſs cover'd o'er
The face of things: along the ſea beat ſhore
Satiate we ſlept: but when the ſacred dawn
Ariſing glitter'd o'er the dewy lawn,
I call'd my fellows, and theſe words addreſt.
My dear aſſociates, here indulge your reſt:
While, with my ſingle ſhip, advent'rous I
Go forth, the manners of yon men to try;
Whether a race unjuſt, of barb'rous might,
Rude, and unconſcious of a ſtranger's right;

Or

Ver. 201. *While, with my ſingle ſhip, advent'rous I.*] The reader may be pleaſed to obſerve, that the poet has here given the reins to his fancy, and run out into a luxuriant deſcription of Ægusa and Sicily: he refreſhes the mind of the reader with a pleaſing and beautiful ſcene, before he enters upon a ſtory of ſo much horror, as this of the Cyclops.

Or ſuch who harbour pity in their breaſt,
Revere the gods, and ſuccour the diſtreſt?
This ſaid, I climb'd my veſſel's lofty ſide;
My train obey'd me and the ſhip unty'd.
In order ſeated on their banks, they ſweep
Neptune's ſmooth face, and cleave the yielding deep.
When to the neareſt verge of land we drew,
Faſt by the ſea a lonely cave we view,
High, and with dark'ning laurels cover'd o'er;
Where ſheep and goats lay ſlumb'ring round the ſhore.
Near this, a fence of marble from the rock,
Brown with o'er-arching pine, and ſpreading oak.
A giant-ſhepherd here his flock maintains
Far from the reſt, and ſolitary reigns,
In ſhelter thick of horrid ſhade reclin'd;
And gloomy miſchiefs labour in his mind.
A form enormous! far unlike the race
Of human birth, in ſtature, or in face;

As

A very ſufficient reaſon may be aſſigned, why Ulyſſes here goes in perſon to ſearch this land: he dares not, as Euſtathius remarks, truſt his companions; their diſobedience among the Ciconians, and their unworthy conduct among the Lotophagi, have convinced him that no confidence is to be repoſed in them: this ſeems probable, and upon this probability Homer proceeds to bring about the puniſhment of Polypheme, which the wiſdom of Ulyſſes effects, and it is an action of importance, and conſequently ought to be performed by the hero of the poem.

Ver. 221. *A form enormous! far unlike the race of human birth.*] Geropius Becanus, an Antwerpian, has wrote a large diſcourſe to prove, that there never were any ſuch men as giants; contrary to the teſtimony both of profane and ſacred hiſtory: thus Moſes ſpeaks of the Rephaims of Aſteroth, the Zamzummims of Ham, the Emims of Moab, and Anakims of Hebron. See Deut. ii. ver. 20. "That alſo was called a land of giants, it was a great people, "and tall as the Zamzummims." Thus Goliah muſt be allowed to be a giant, for he was ſix cubits and a ſpan, that is, nine feet and a ſpan in height; his coat of mail weighed five thouſand ſhekels

As ſome lone mountain's monſtrous growth he ſtood,
Crown'd with rough thickets, and a nodding wood.
I left my veſſel at the point of land,
And cloſe to guard it, gave our crew command:
With only twelve the boldeſt and the beſt,
I ſeek th' adventure, and forſake the reſt.
Then took a goatſkin fill'd with precious wine,
The gift of Maron of Evantheus' line,
(The prieſt of Phœbus at th' Iſmarian ſhrine,)

In

kels of braſs, about one hundred and fifty pounds: (but I confeſs others underſtand the leſſer ſhekel,) the head of his ſpear alone weighed ſix hundred ſhekels of iron, that is, about eighteen or nineteen pounds. We find the like relations in profane hiſtory: Plutarch in his life of Theſeus ſays, that age was productive of men of prodigious ſtature, giants. Thus Diodorus Siculus; "Æ-"gyptii ſcribunt, Iſidis ætate, fuiſſe vaſto corpore homines, quos "Græci dixere gigantes." Herodotus affirms that the body of Oreſtes was dug up, and appeared to be ſeven cubits long; but Aulus Gelius believes this to be an error. Joſephus writes, l. xviii. c. 6. that Vitellius ſent a Jew named Eleazar, ſeven cubits in height, as a preſent from Artabanes king of the Parthians, to Tiberius Cæſar; this man was ten feet and a half high. Pliny vii. 16. ſpeaks of a man that was nine feet nine inches high; and in another place, vi. 30. "Sybortas, gentem Æthiopum Nomadum, "octona cubita longitudine excedere."

Thus it is evident, that there have been men of very extraordinary ſtature in former ages. Though perhaps ſuch inſtances were not frequent in any age or any nation. So that Homer only amplifies, not invents; and as there was really a people called Cyclopeans, ſo they might be men of great ſtature, or giants.

It may ſeem ſtrange that in all ancient ſtories the firſt planters of moſt nations are recorded to be giants; I ſcarce can perſuade myſelf but ſuch accounts are generally fabulous; and hope to be pardoned for a conjecture which may give a ſeeming reaſon how ſuch ſtories came to prevail. The Greeks were a people of very great antiquity; they made many expeditions, as appears from Jaſon, &c. and ſent out frequent colonies: now the head of every colony was called Ἀρχηγέτης, and theſe adventurers being perſons of great figure in ſtory, were recorded as men of war, of might and renown,

through

In ſacred ſhade his honour'd manſion ſtood
Amidſt Apollo's conſecrated wood;
Him, and his houſe, heav'n mov'd my mind to ſave,
And coſtly preſents in return he gave;
Seven golden talents to perfection wrought,
A ſilver bowl that held a copious draught,
And twelve large veſſels of unmingled wine,
Melliſluous, undecaying, and divine;
Which now ſome ages from his race conceal'd,
The hoary ſire in gratitude reveal'd;
Such was the wine: to quench whoſe fervent ſteam,
Scarce twenty meaſures from the living ſtream,
To cool one cup ſuffice'd: the goblet crown'd
Breath'd aromatic fragrancies around
Of this an ample vaſe we heav'd aboard,
And brought another with proviſions ſtor'd.
My ſoul foreboded I ſhould find the bow'r
Of ſome fell monſter, fierce with barb'rous pow'r,
Some ruſtic wretch, who liv'd in heav'n's deſpight,
Contemning laws, and trampling on the right.

The

through the old world: it is therefore not impoſſible but the Hebrews might form their word Anac, from the Greek ἄναξ, and uſe it to denote perſons of uncommon might and abilities. Theſe they called Anac, and ſons of Anac; and afterwards in a leſs proper ſenſe uſed it to ſignify men of uncommon ſtature, or giants. So that in this ſenſe, all nations may be ſaid to be originally peopled by a ſon of Anac, or a giant. But this is ſubmitted as a conjecture to the reader's judgement.

Ver. 243. *Scarce twenty meaſures from the living ſtream,*
To cool one cup ſuffice'd:———]

There is no wine of ſo ſtrong a body as to bear ſuch a diſproportionable quantity; but Homer amplifies the ſtrength of it to prepare the reader for its ſurpriſing effects immediately upon Polypheme.

Ver. 250. *Some ruſtic wretch, who liv'd,* &c.] This whole paſſage muſt be conſidered as told by a perſon long after the adventure was paſt, otherwiſe how ſhould Ulyſſes know that this cave was

the

The cave we found, but vacant all within,
(His flock the giant tended on the green)
But round the grot we gaze; and all we view,
In order rang'd, our admiration drew:
The bending ſhelves with loads of cheeſes preſt,
The folded flocks each ſep'rate from the reſt.
(The larger here, and there the leſſer lambs,
The new fall'n young here bleating for their dams;
The kid diſtinguiſh'd from the lambkin lies:)
The cavern echoes with reſponſive cries.
Capacious chargers all around were laid.
Full pails, and veſſels of the milking trade.
With freſh proviſions hence our fleet to ſtore
My friends adviſe me, and to quit the ſhore;
Or drive a flock of ſheep and goats away,
Conſult our ſafety, and put off to ſea.
Their wholeſome counſel raſhly I declin'd,
Curious to view the man of monſtrous kind,
And try what ſocial rites a ſavage lends:
Dire rites alas! and fatal to my friends!
Then firſt a fire we kindle, and prepare
For his return with ſacrifice and pray'r.
The loaden ſhelves afford us full repaſt;
We ſit expecting. Lo! he comes at laſt.
Near half a foreſt on his back he bore,
And caſt the pond'rous burden at the door.

the habitation of a ſavage monſter before he had ſeen him? And when he tells us that himſelf and twelve companions went to ſearch, what people were inhabitants of this iſland? Euſtathius and Dacier ſeem both to overlook this obſervation; for in a following note ſhe condemns Ulyſſes for not flying from the iſland, as he was adviſed by his companions. But if, on the other hand, we ſuppoſe that Ulyſſes was under apprehenſions, from the ſavageneſs of the place, of finding a ſavage race of people, it will be natural enough that his mind ſhould forbode as much; and it appears from other paſſages, that this ſort of inſtinctive preſage was a favourite opinion of Homer's.

It

It thunder'd as it fell. We trembled then,
And ſought the deep receſſes of the den.
Now driv'n before him, thro' the arching rock,
Came tumbling, heaps on heaps, th' unnumber'd flock;
Big udder'd ewes, and goats of female kind,
(The males were penn'd in outward courts behind)
Then, heav'd on high, a rock's enormous weight
To the cave's mouth he roll'd, and clos'd the gate.
(Scarce twenty-four wheel'd cars, compact and ſtrong,
The maſſy load could bear, or roll along.)
He next betakes him to his ev'ning cares,
And ſitting down, to milk his flocks prepares;
Of half their udders eaſes firſt the dams,
Then to the mother's teat ſubmits the lambs.
Half the white ſtream to hard'ning cheeſe he preſt,
And high in wicker-baſkets heap'd: the reſt,
Reſerv'd in bowls, ſupply'd the nightly feaſt.
His labour done, he fir'd the pile that gave
A ſudden blaze, and lighted all the cave.
We ſtand diſcovered by the riſing fires,
Aſkance the giant glares, and thus inquires.
What are ye, gueſts; on what adventure, ſay,
Thus far ye wander thro' the wat'ry way?
Pirates perhaps, who ſeek thro' ſeas unknown
The lives of others, and expoſe your own?
His voice like thunder thro' the cavern ſounds:
My bold companions thrilling fear confounds,
Appall'd at ſight of more than mortal man!
At length, with heart recover'd, I began.
From Troy's fam'd fields, ſad wand'rers o'er the main,
Behold the relics of the Grecian train!

Thro'

Ver. 307. *From Troy's fam'd fields*, &c.] This ſpeech is very well adapted to make an impreſſion upon Polypheme. Ulyſſes applies to move either his fears or his compaſſion; he tells him he is an

Thro' various ſeas by various veſſels toſt,
And force'd by ſtorms unwilling, on your coaſt;
Far from our deſtin'd courſe, and native land,
Such was our fate, and ſuch high Jove's command!
Nor what we are befits us to diſclaim,
Atrides' friends (in arms a mighty name)
Who taught proud Troy and all her ſons to bow;
Victors of late, but humble ſuppliants now!
Low at thy knee thy ſuccour we implore;
Reſpect us, human, and relieve us, poor.
At leaſt ſome hoſpitable gift beſtow;
'Tis what the happy to the unhappy owe:
'Tis what the gods require: thoſe gods revere,
The poor and ſtranger are their conſtant care;
To Jove their cauſe and their revenge belongs,
He wanders with them, and he feels their wrongs.
Fools that ye are! (the ſavage thus replies,
His inward fury blazing at his eyes)
Or ſtrangers, diſtant far from our abodes,
To bid me rev'rence or regard the gods.
Know then we Cyclops are a race, above
Thoſe air-bred people, and their goat-nurs'd Jove:
And learn, our power proceeds with thee and thine,
Not as he wills, but as ourſelves incline.
But anſwer, the good ſhip that brought ye o'er,
Where lies ſhe anchor'd? near or off the ſhore?
Thus he. His meditated fraud I find,
(Vers'd in the turns of various human kind)

an unfortunate perſon, and comes as a ſuppliant; and if this prevails nothing, he adds, he is a ſubject of the great Agamemnon, who had lately deſtroyed a mighty kingdom: which is ſpoken to make him afraid to offer violence to the ſubject of a king who had power to revenge any injuries offered his people. To intimidate him further, he concludes with the mention of the gods, and in particular of Jupiter, as avengers of any breach of the laws of hoſpitality: theſe are arguments well choſen to move any perſon, but an inhuman Polypheme. *Euſtathius.*

And cautious, thus. Againſt a dreadful rock,
Faſt by your ſhore the gallant veſſel broke,
Scarce with theſe few I 'ſcap'd; of all my train,
Whom angry Neptune whelm'd beneath the main;
The ſcatter'd wreck the winds blew back again.
He anſwer'd with his deed. His bloody hand
Snatch'd two, unhappy! of my martial band;
And daſh'd like dogs againſt the ſtony floor:
The pavement ſwims with brains and mingled gore.
Torn limb from limb, he ſpreads his horrid feaſt,
And fierce devours it like a mountain beaſt:
He ſucks the marrow, and the blood he drains,
Nor entrails, fleſh, nor ſolid bone remains.
We ſee the death from which we cannot move,
And humbled groan beneath the hand of Jove.
His ample maw with human carnage fill'd,
A milky deluge next the giant ſwill'd;
Then ſtretch'd in length o'er half the cavern'd rock,
Lay ſenſeleſs and ſupine, amidſt the flock.
To ſeize the time, and with a ſudden wound
To fix the ſlumb'ring monſter to the ground,
My ſoul impels me; and in act I ſtand
To draw the ſword; but wiſdom held my hand.
A deed ſo raſh had finiſh'd all our fate,
No mortal forces from the lofty gate
Could roll the rock, in hopeleſs grief we lay,
And ſigh, expecting the return of day.
Now did the roſy finger'd morn ariſe,
And ſhed her ſacred light along the ſkies.
He wakes, he lights the fire, he milks the dams,
And to the mothers teats ſubmits the lambs.
The taſk thus finiſh'd of his morning hours,
Two more he ſnatches, murders, and devours.
Then pleas'd and whiſtling, drives his flock before;
Removes the rocky mountain from the door,

And ſhuts again: with equal eaſe diſpos'd,
As a light quiver's lid is op'd and clos'd.
His giant voice the echoing region fills:
His flocks, obedient, ſpread o'er all the hills.
Thus left behind, e'en in the laſt deſpair
I thought, devis'd, and Pallas heard my prayer.
Revenge, and doubt, and caution work'd my breaſt;
But this of many counſels ſeem'd the beſt:
The monſter's club within the cave I 'ſpy'd,
A tree of ſtatelieſt growth, and yet undry'd,
Green from the wood; of height and bulk ſo vaſt,
The largeſt ſhip might claim it for a maſt.
This ſhorten'd of its top, I gave my train
A fathom's length, to ſhape it and to plain;
The narrow'r end I ſharpen'd to a ſpire;
Whoſe point we harden'd with the force of fire,
And hid it in the duſt that ſtrow'd the cave.
Then to my few companions, bold and brave,
Propos'd, who firſt the vent'rous deed ſhould try,
In the broad orbit of his monſtrous eye
To plunge the brand, and twirl the pointed wood,
When ſlumber next ſhould tame the man of blood.
Juſt as I wiſh'd, the lots were caſt on four:
Myſelf the fifth. We ſtand and wait the hour.
He comes with ev'ning: all his fleecy flock
Before him march, and pour into the rock:
Not one, or male or female ſtaid behind;
(So fortune chance'd, or ſo ſome god deſign'd)

Ver. 394. ——*The lots were caſt*——] Ulyſſes bids his friends to caſt lots; this is done to ſhew that he would not voluntarily expoſe them to ſo imminent danger. If he had made the choice himſelf, they whom he had choſen might have thought he had given them up to deſtruction, and they whom he had rejected might have judged it a ſtain upon them as a want of merit, and ſo have complained of injuſtice; but by this method he avoids theſe inconveniencies.

Ver. 399. ——*Or ſo ſome god deſign'd.*] Ulyſſes aſcribes it to the

Then heaving high the ſtone's unwieldy weight,
He roll'd it on the cave, and clos'd the gate.
Firſt down he ſits, to milk the woolly dams,
And then permits their udder to the lambs.
Next ſeiz'd two wretches more, and headlong caſt,
Brain'd on the rock; his ſecond dire repaſt.
I then approach'd him reeking with their gore,
And held the brimming goblet foaming o'er:
Cyclop! ſince human fleſh has been thy feaſt,
Now drain this goblet, potent to digeſt:
Know hence what treaſure's in our ſhip we loſt,
And what rich liquors other climates boaſt.
We to thy ſhore the precious freight ſhall bear,
If home thou ſend us, and vouchſafe to ſpare.
But oh! thus furious, thirſting thus for gore,
The ſons of men ſhall ne'er approach thy ſhore,
And never ſhalt thou taſte this nectar more.
He heard, he took, and pouring down his throat
Delighted, ſwill'd the large luxurious draught.
More! give me more, he cry'd: the boon be thine,
Whoe'er thou art that bear'ſt celeſtial wine!
Declare thy name; not mortal is this juice,
Such as th' unbleſt Cyclopean climes produce,
(Tho' ſure our vine the largeſt cluſter yields,
And Jove's ſcorn'd thunder ſerves to drench our fields,)
But this deſcended from the bleſt abodes,
A rill of nectar, ſtreaming from the gods.
He ſaid, and greedy graſp'd the heady bowl,
Thrice drain'd, and pour'd the deluge on his ſoul.

the influence of the gods that Polypheme drives the whole flock into his den, and does not ſeparate the females from the males as he had before done; for by this accident Ulyſſes makes his eſcape, as appears from the following part of the ſtory. Homer here uſes the word διαμήνες, to ſhew the ſuſpicion which Polypheme might entertain that Ulyſſes had other companions abroad who might plunder his flocks; and this gives another reaſon why he drove them all into his cave, namely for the greater ſecurity.

His ſenſe lay cover'd with the dozy fume;
While thus my fraudful ſpeech I reaſſume.
Thy promis'd boon, O Cyclop! now I claim,
And plead my title: Noman is my name.
By that diſtinguiſh'd from my tender years,
'Tis what my parents call me, and my peers.
The giant then. Our promis'd grace receive,
The hoſpitable boon we mean to give:
When all thy wretched crew have felt my pow'r,
Noman ſhall be the laſt I will devour.
He ſaid: then nodding with the fumes of wine,
Dropt his huge head, and ſnoring lay ſupine.
His neck obliquely o'er his ſhoulders hung,
Preſt with the weight of ſleep that tames the ſtrong!
There belcht the mingled ſtreams of wine and blood,
And human fleſh, his indigeſted food.
Sudden I ſtir the embers, and inſpire
With animating breath the ſeeds of fire;
Each drooping ſpirit with bold words repair,
And urge my train the dreadful d to dare.
The ſtake now glow'd beneath the burning bed
(Green as it was) and ſparkled fi'ry red.
Then forth the vengeful inſtrument I bring;
With beating hearts my fellows form a ring.
Urge'd by ſome preſent god, they ſwift let fall
The pointed torment on his viſual ball.
Myſelf above them from a riſing ground
Guide the ſharp ſtake, and twirl it round and round.
As when a ſhipwright ſtands his workmen o'er,
Who ply the wimble, ſome huge beam to bore;
Urge'd on all hands it nimbly ſpins about,
The grain deep-piercing till it ſcoops it out:
In his broad eye ſo whirls the fi'ry wood;
From the pierc'd pupil ſpouts the boiling blood;
Singe'd are his brows; the ſcorching lids grow black;
The jelly bubbles, and the fibres crack.

And as when arm'rers temper in the ford
The keen-edge'd pole ax, or the ſhining ſword,
The red-hot metal hiſſes in the lake,
Thus in his eye-ball hiſs'd the plunging ſtake.
He ſends a dreadful groan: the rocks around
Thro' all their inmoſt winding caves reſound.
Scar'd we receded. Forth, with frantic hand
He tore, and daſh'd on earth the goary brand:
Then calls the Cyclops, all that round him dwell,
With voice like thunder, and a direful yell.
From all their dens the one-ey'd race repair,
From rifted rocks, and mountains bleak in air.
All haſte aſſembled, at his well known roar,
Enquire the cauſe, and croud the cavern door.
What hurts thee, Polypheme? what ſtrange affright
Thus breaks our ſlumbers, and diſturbs the night?
Does any mortal in th' unguarded hour
Of ſleep, oppreſs thee, or by fraud or pow'r?
Or thieves inſidious the fair flock ſurpriſe?
Thus they: the Cyclop from his den replies,
Friends, Noman kills me; Noman in the hour
Of ſleep, oppreſſes me with fraudful pow'r.
" If no man hurt thee, but the hand divine
" Inflict diſeaſe it fits thee to reſign:
" To Jove or to thy father Neptune pray,"
The brethren cry'd, and inſtant ſtrode away.
Joy touch'd my ſecret ſoul, and conſcious heart,
Pleas'd with th' effect of conduct and of art.
Meantime the Cyclop, raging with his wound,
Spreads his wide arms, and ſearches round and round:
At laſt, the ſtone removing from the gate,
With hands extended in the midſt he ſat:
And ſearch'd each paſſing ſheep, and felt it o'er,
Secure to ſeize us ere we reach'd the door.
(Such as his ſhallow wit, he deem'd was mine)
But ſecret I revolv'd the deep deſign;

'Twas for our lives my lab'ring boſom wrought;
Each ſcheme I turn'd, and ſharpen'd ev'ry thought;
This way and that, I caſt to ſave my friends,
'Till one reſolve my varying counſel ends.
Strong were the rams, with native purple fair,
Well fed, and largeſt of the fleecy care.
Theſe three and three, with oſier bands we ty'd
(The twining bands the Cyclop's bed ſupply'd)
The midmoſt bore a man; the outward two
Secur'd each ſide: ſo bound we all the crew.
One ram remain'd, the leader of the flock;
In his deep fleece my graſping hands I lock,
And faſt beneath, in woolly curls inwove,
There cling implicit, and confide in Jove.
When roſy morning glimmer'd o'er the dales,
He drove to paſture all the luſty males:
The ewes ſtill foided, with diſtended thighs
Unmilk'd, lay bleating in diſtreſsful cries.
But heedleſs of thoſe cares, with anguiſh ſtung,
He felt their fleeces as they paſs'd along.
(Fool that he was) and let them ſafely go,
All unſuſpecting of their freight below.
The maſter ram at laſt approach'd the gate,
Charge'd with his wool, and with Ulyſſes's fate.
Him while he paſt the monſter blind beſpoke:
What makes my ram the lag of all the flock?

Ver. 511. *One ram remain'd, the leader of the flock.*] This paſſage has been miſunderſtood, to imply that Ulyſſes took more care of himſelf than of his companions, in chuſing the largeſt ram for his own convenience; an imputation unworthy of the character of a hero. But there is no ground for it; he takes more care of his friends than of his own perſon, for he allots them three ſheep, and lets them eſcape before him. Beſides, this conduct was neceſſary; for all his friends were bound, and, by chuſing this ram, he keeps himſelf at liberty to unbind the reſt after their eſcape. Neither was there any other method practicable; for, being the laſt, there was no perſon to bind him. *Euſtathius.*

First

Firſt thou wert wont to crop the flow'ry mead,
Firſt to the fields and river's bank to lead,
And firſt with ſtately ſtep at ev'ning hour
Thy fleecy fellows uſher to their bow'r.
Now far the laſt, with penſive pace and ſlow
Thou mov'ſt, as conſcious of thy maſter's woe!
Seeſt thou theſe lids that now unfold in vain?
(The deed of Noman and his wicked train)
Oh didſt thou feel for thy afflicted lord,
And wou'd but fate the pow'r of ſpeech afford;
So on might'ſt thou tell me, where in ſecret here
The daſtard lurks all trembling with his fear;
Swung round and round, and daſh'd from rock to rock,
His batter'd brains ſhou'd on the pavement ſmoke.
No eaſe, no pleaſure my ſad heart receives,
While ſuch a monſter as vile Noman lives.
The giant ſpoke, and thro' the hollow rock
Diſmiſs'd the ram, the father of the flock.
No ſooner freed, and thro' th' incloſure paſt,
Firſt I releaſe myſelf, my fellows laſt:
Fat ſheep and goats in throngs we drive before,
And reach our veſſel on the winding ſhore.
With joy the ſailors view their friends return'd,
And hail us living whom as dead they mourn'd.
Big tears of tranſport ſtand in ev'ry eye,
I check their fondneſs, and command to fly.
Aboard in haſte they heave the wealthy ſheep,
And ſnatch their oars and ruſh into the deep.
Now off at ſea, and from the ſhallows clear,
As far as human voice could reach the ear;
With taunts the diſtant giant I accoſt,
Hear me, oh Cyclop! hear ungracious hoſt!
'Twas on no coward, no ignoble ſlave,
Thou meditat'ſt thy meal in yonder cave;
But one, the vengeance fated from above
Doom'd to inflict; the inſtrument of Jove.

Thy

Thy barb'rous breach of hoſpitable bands,
The god, the god revenges by my hands.
  Theſe words the Cyclop's burning rage provoke:
From the tall hill he rends a pointed rock;
High o'er the billows flew the maſſy load,
And near the ſhip came thund'ring on the flood.
It almoſt bruſh'd the helm, and fell before:
The whole ſea ſhook, and refluent beat the ſhore.
The ſtrong concuſſion on the heaving tide
Roll'd back the veſſel to th' iſland's ſide:
Again I ſhov'd her off; our fate to fly,
Each nerve we ſtretch, and ev'ry oar we ply.
Juſt 'ſcap'd impending death, when now again
We twice as far had furrow'd back the main,
Once more I raiſe my voice; my friends afraid
With mild entreaties my deſign diſſuade.
What boots the god-leſs giant to provoke?
Whoſe arm may ſink us at a ſingle ſtroke.
Already, when the dreadful rock he threw,
Old ocean ſhook, and back his ſurges flew.
The ſounding voice directs his aim again;
The rock o'erwhelms us, and we 'ſcap'd in vain.
  But I, of mind elate, and ſcorning fear,
Thus with new taunts inſult the monſter's ear.
Cyclop! if any, pitying thy diſgrace,
Aſk who diſfigur'd thus that eye leſs face?
Say 'twas Ulyſſes; 'twas his deed, declare,
Laertes' ſon, of Ithaca the fair;
Ulyſſes, far in fighting fields renown'd,
Before whoſe arm Troy tumbl'd to the ground.
  Th' aſtoniſh'd ſavage with a roar replies:
Oh heav'ns! oh faith of ancient prophecies!
This, Telemus Eurymedes foretold,
(The mighty ſeer who on theſe hills grew old;

Ver. 595. *This, Telemus Eurymedes foretold.*] This incident ſufficiently ſhews the uſe of that diſſimulation which enters into the character

Skill'd the dark fate of mortals to declare,
And learn'd in all wing'd omens of the air)
Long ſince he menace'd, ſuch was fate's command;
And nam'd Ulyſſes as the deſtin'd hand.
I deem'd ſome god like giant to behold,
Or lofty hero, haughty, brave, and bold;
Not this weak pigmy wretch, of mean deſign,
Who not by ſtrength ſubdu'd me, but by wine.
But come, accept our gifts, and join to pray
Great Neptune's bleſſing on the wat'ry way:
For his I am, and I the lineage own:
Th' immortal father no leſs boaſts the ſon.
His pow'r can heal me, and re-light my eye;
And only his, of all the gods on high.

character of Ulyſſes: if he had diſcovered his name, the Cyclop had deſtroyed him as his moſt dangerous enemy. Plutarch in his diſcourſe upon Garrulity, commends the fidelity of the companions of Ulyſſes, who, when they were dragged by this giant and daſhed againſt the rock, confeſſed not a word concerning their lord, and ſcorned to purchaſe their lives at the expence of their honeſty. Ulyſſes himſelf, adds he, was the moſt eloquent and moſt ſilent of men; he knew that a word ſpoken never wrought ſo much good, as a word concealed; men teach us to ſpeak, but the gods teach us ſilence; for ſilence is the firſt thing that is taught us at our initiation into ſacred myſteries; and we find theſe companions had profited under ſo great a maſter in ſilence as Ulyſſes.

Ver. 603. *Not this weak pigmy wretch*———] This is ſpoken in compliance with the character of a giant; the Phæacians wondered at the manly ſtature of Ulyſſes; Polypheme ſpeaks of him as a dwarf; his rage undoubtedly made him treat him with ſo much contempt. Nothing in nature can be better imagined than this ſtory of the Cyclops, if we conſider the aſſembly before which it was ſpoken; I mean the Phæacians, who had been driven from their habitation by the Cyclopeans, as appears from the ſixth of the Odyſſey, and compelled to make a new ſettlement in their preſent country: Ulyſſes gratifies them by ſhewing what revenge he took upon one of their ancient enemies, and they could not decently refuſe aſſiſtance to a perſon, who had puniſhed thoſe who had inſulted their fore-fathers.

Oh!

Oh! could this arm (I thus aloud rejoin'd)
From that vaſt bulk diſlodge thy bloody mind,
And ſend thee howling to the realms of night!
As ſure, as Neptune cannot give thee ſight.
Thus I: while raging he repeats his cries,
With hands uplifted to the ſtarry ſkies.
Hear me, oh Neptune! thou whoſe arms are hurl'd
From ſhore to ſhore, and gird the ſolid world.
If thine I am, nor thou my birth diſown,
And if the unhappy Cyclop be thy ſon;
Let not Ulyſſes breathe his native air,
Laertes' ſon of Ithaca the fair.
If to review his country be his fate,
Be it thro' toils and ſuff'rings, long and late,
His loſt companions let him firſt deplore;
Some veſſel, not his own, tranſport him o'er;
And when at home from foreign ſuff'rings freed,
More near and deep, domeſtic woes ſucceed!
With imprecations thus he fill'd the air,
And angry Neptune heard the unrighteous pray'r.
A larger rock then heaving from the plain,
He whirl'd it round: it ſung acroſs the main:
It fell, and bruſh'd the ſtern: the billows roar,
Shake at the weight, and refluent beat the ſhore.
With all our force we kept aloof at ſea,
And gain'd the iſland where our veſſels lay.

Ver. 617. *The prayer of the Cyclop.*] This is a maſter-piece of art in Ulyſſes; he ſhews Neptune to be his enemy, which might deter the Phæacians from aſſiſting in his tranſportation, yet brings this very circumſtance as an argument to induce them to it. "O "Neptune, (ſays the Cyclop), deſtroy Ulyſſes, or if he be fated to "return, may it be in a veſſel not of his own!" Here he plainly tells the Phæacians that the prayer of the Cyclop was almoſt accompliſhed, for his own ſhips were deſtroyed by Neptune, and now he was ready to ſail in a foreign veſſel; by which the whole prayer would be compleated. By this he perſuades them, that they were the people ordained by the fates to land him in his own country.

Our

Our ſight the whole collected navy chear'd,
Who, waiting long by turns had hop'd and fear'd.
There diſembarking on the green ſea-ſide,
We land our cattle, and the ſpoil divide:
Of theſe due ſhares to ev'ry ſailor fall;
The maſter ram was voted mine by all:
And him (the guardian of Ulyſſes's fate)
With pious mind to heav'n I conſecrate.
But the great God, whoſe thunder rends the ſkies,
Averſe beholds the ſmoking ſacrifice;
And ſees me wand'ring ſtill from coaſt to coaſt;
And all my veſſels, all my people, loſt!

Ver. 642. *The maſter ram was voted mine———*] This perhaps might be a preſent of honour and diſtinction: but I ſhould rather take it with Euſtathius to be the ram which brought Ulyſſes out of the den of Polypheme. That hero immediately offers it in ſacrifice to Jupiter, in gratitude for his deliverance; an inſtance of piety to be imitated in more enlightened ages.

The book concludes with a teſtimony of this hero's humanity; in the midſt of the joy for his own ſafety, his generous heart finds room for a tender ſentiment for the loſs of his companions; both his joys and his ſorrows are commendable and virtuous.

Virgil has borrowed this epiſode of Polyphemus, and inſerted it into the third of the Æneis. I will not preſume to decide which author has the greateſt ſucceſs, they both have their peculiar excellencies. Rapin confeſſes this epiſode to be equal to any parts of the Iliad, that it is an original, and that Homer introduced that monſtrous character to ſhew the marvellous, and paint it in a new ſet of colours. Demetrius Phalereus calls it a piece of ſublime ſtrangely horrible; and Longinus, even while he is condemning the Odyſſey, allows this adventure of Polypheme to be very great and beautiful; (for ſo Monſieur Boileau underſtands Longinus, though Monſieur Dacier differs from his judgement). In Homer we find a greater variety of natural incidents than in Virgil, but in Virgil a greater pomp of verſe. Homer is not uniform in his deſcription, but ſometimes ſtoops perhaps below the dignity of epic poetry; Virgil walks along with an even, grave, and majeſtic pace: they both raiſe our admiration, mixed with delight and terror.

While

While thoughtleſs we indulge the genial rite,
As plenteous cates and flowing bowls invite;
'Till ev'ning Phœbus roll'd away the light:
Stretch'd on the ſhore in careleſs eaſe we reſt,
'Till rudy morning purpled o'er the eaſt.
Then from their anchors all our ſhips unbind,
And mount the decks, and call the willing wind.
Now range'd in order on our banks, we ſweep
With haſty ſtrokes the hoarſe reſounding deep;
Blind to the future, penſive with our fears,
Glad for the living, for the dead in tears.

THE ODYSSEY.

*BOOK X.

THE ARGUMENT.

Adventures with Æolus, the Leſtrigons, and Circe.

Ulyſſes arrives at the iſland of Æolus, who gives him proſperous winds, and incloſes the adverſe ones in a bag, which his companions untying, they are driven back again, and rejected. Then they ſail to the Leſtrigons, where they loſe eleven ſhips, and with one only remaining, proceed to the iſland of Circe. Eurylochus is ſent firſt with ſome companions, all which, except Eurylochus, are transformed into ſwine. Ulyſſes then undertakes the adventure, and by the help of Mercury, who gives him the herb Moly, overcomes the enchantreſs, and procures the reſtoration of his men. After a year's ſtay with her, he prepares at her inſtigation for his voyage to the infernal ſhades.

AT length we reach'd Æolia's ſea-girt ſhore,
Where great Hippotades the ſceptre bore,

A

* Poetry is a mixture of hiſtory and fable; the foundation is hiſtorical, becauſe the poet does not entirely neglect truth; the reſt is fabulous, becauſe naked truth would not be ſufficiently ſurpriſing; for the marvellous ought to take place, eſpecially in epic poetry. But it may be aſked, does not Homer offend againſt all degrees of probability in theſe epiſodes of the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, Cyclops and Antiphates? How are theſe incredible ſtories to be reduced into the bounds of probability? It is true, the

A floating isle! high-rais'd by toil divine,
Strong walls of brass the rocky coast confine.
Six blooming youths, in private grandeur bred,
And six fair daughters, grace'd the royal bed:

These

marvellous ought to be used in epic poetry; but ought it to transgress all power of belief? Aristotle in his Art of Poetry lays down a rule to justify these incidents: "A poet (says that author), ought "to prefer things impossible, provided they are probable, before "things possible, that are nevertheless incredible;" chap. xv. This rule is not without obscurity; but Monsieur Dacier has explained it in his annotations upon that author: a thing may be impossible, and yet probable: thus when the poet introduces a deity, any incident humanly impossible receives a full probability by being ascribed to the skill and power of a god: it is thus we justify the story of the transformation of the ship of the Phæacians into a rock, and the fleet of Æneas into sea nymphs. But such relations ought not to be too frequent in a poem; for it is an established rule, that all incidents which require a divine probability only, should be so disengaged from the action, that they may be subtracted from it without destroying it; for instance, if we omit the transformation of the ship, the action of the Odyssey will retain the same perfection. And therefore those episodes which are necessary, and make essential parts of the poem, ought to be grounded upon human probability; now the episodes of Circe, Polypheme, the Sirens, &c. are necessary to the action of the Odyssey: but will any man say they are within the bounds of human probability? How then shall we solve this difficulty? Homer artificially has brought them within the degrees of it; he makes Ulysses relate them before a credulous and ignorant assembly; he lets us into the character of the Phæacians, by saying they were a very dull nation, in the sixth book,

Where never science rear'd her laurel'd head.

It is thus the poet gives probability to his fables, by reciting them to a people who believed them, and who through a lazineſs of life were fond of romantic stories; he adapts himself to his audience, and yet even here he is not unmindful of his more intelligent readers: he gives them (observes Bossu), in these fables all the pleasure that can be reaped from physical or moral truths, disguised under

These ſons their ſiſters wed, and all remain,
Their parents pride, and pleaſure of their reign.
All day they feaſt, all day the bowls flow round,
And joy and muſic thro' the iſle reſound:

under miraculous allegories, and by this method reconciles them to poetical probability.

There are ſeveral heads to which probability may be reduced; either to divinity, and then nothing is improbable, for every thing is poſſible to a deity; or to our ideas of things whether true or falſe: thus in the deſcent of Ulyſſes into hell, there is not one word of probability or hiſtoric truth; but if we examine it by the ideas that the old world entertained of hell, it becomes probable; or laſtly, we may have reſpect to vulgar opinion or fame; for a poet is at liberty to relate a falſhood, provided it be commonly believed to be true. We might have recourſe to this laſt rule, which is likewiſe laid down by Ariſtotle to vindicate the Odyſſey, if there were occaſion for it; for in all ages ſuch fables have found belief.

Ver. 1. *We reach'd Æolia's ſhore.*] It is difficult to diſtinguiſh what is truth from what is fiction in this relation: Diodorus, who was a Sicilian, ſpeaks of Æolus, and refers to this paſſage: "This "is that Æolus, (ſays he), who entertained Ulyſſes in his voy-"ages: he is reported to have been a pious and juſt prince, and "given to hoſpitality, and therefore φίλος ἀθανάτοις, as Homer "expreſſes it." But whence has the fable of his being the governor of the winds taken its foundation? Euſtathius tells us, that he was a very wiſe man, and one who from long obſervation could foretell what weather was like to follow: others ſay he was an aſtronomer, and ſtudied chiefly the nature of the winds; and as Atlas from his knowledge in aſtrology was ſaid to ſuſtain the heavens; ſo Æolus, from his experience and obſervation, was fabled to be the ruler or diſpoſer of the winds. But what explication can be given of this bag, in which he is ſaid to bind the winds? Eratoſthenes, continues Euſtathius, ſaid pleaſantly, that we ſhall then find the places where Ulyſſes voyaged, when we have diſcovered the artiſt, or cobler, τὸν ῥαπτέα, who ſewed up this bag of the winds. But the reaſon of the fiction is ſuppoſed to be this: Æolus taught the uſe and management of ſails, and having foretold Ulyſſes from what quarter the winds would blow, he may be ſaid to have gathered them into a kind of incloſure, and retained them as uſe ſhould require.

At night each pair on ſplendid carpets lay,
And crown'd with love the pleaſures of the day.

This

Ver. 5. *Six blooming youths——And ſix fair daughters.*] Diodorus Siculus mentions the names of the ſix ſons of Æolus, but is ſilent concerning his daughters, and therefore others, who can find myſteries in the plaineſt deſcription, aſſure us, that this not to be underſtood hiſtorically, but allegorically: Æolus repreſents the year, his twelve children are the twelve months, ſix of which are female, to denote thoſe ſix months in which the earth brings forth her fruits; by his ſix ſons the other months are underſtood, in which the ſeed is ſown, or in which the herbs, fruits, &c. are nouriſhed in order to production; theſe may therefore be called males. But this is to darken an author into myſtery, not to explain him. Dacier gives us another allegorical interpretation: the poet makes him the governor of the winds, and gives him twelve children; theſe denote the twelve principal winds; half of which children are males, half females; the males denote the winter winds, which as it were brood upon the earth, and generate its increaſe; the females thoſe warmer ſeaſons of the year, when the more prolific winds blow, and make the earth teem with fruitfulneſs: theſe children of Æolus are in continual feaſts in his palace; that is, the winds are continually fed by the exhalations from the earth, which may be called their food or nouriſhment: the brothers and ſiſters intermarry; this denotes the nature of the winds, which blow promiſcuouſly, and one wind unites itſelf with another from all quarters of the world indifferently: the brothers and ſiſters are ſaid to ſleep by night together; that is, the winds are uſually ſtill and calm, and as it were reſt together, at that ſeaſon. But what occaſion is there to have recourſe to an uncertain allegory, when ſuch great names as Polybius, Strabo, and Diodorus, aſſure us, that this relation is in part true hiſtory; and if there was really ſuch a king as Æolus, why might he not be a father of ſix ſons and as many daughters? I ſhould prefer a plain hiſtory to a dark allegory.

Ver. 9. *All day they feaſt——*
——And muſic thro' the iſle reſounds.]

Homer was not unacquainted with the wonders related of this iſland of Lipara. "In this iſland, (ſays Ariſtotle), a monument is re-
"ported to be, of which they tell miracles: they aſſure us that
"they hear iſſuing from it the ſound of timbrels or cymbals,

"plainly

This happy port affords our wand'ring fleet
A month's reception, and a ſafe retreat.
Full oft' the monarch urge'd me to relate
The fall of Ilion, and the Grecian fate;
Full oft' I told: at length for parting mov'd;
The king with mighty gifts my ſuit approv'd.
The adverſe winds in leathern bags he brace'd,
Compreſs'd their force, and lock'd each ſtruggling blaſt:
For him the mighty ſire of gods aſſign'd
The tempeſt's lord, the tyrant of the wind;
His word alone the liſt'ning ſtorms obey,
To ſmooth the deep, or ſwell the foamy ſea.
Theſe in my hollow ſhip the monarch hung,
Securely fetter'd by a ſilver thong;
But Zephyrus exempt, with friendly gales
He charge'd to fill, and guide the ſwelling ſails:
Rare gift! but oh, what gift to fools avails!
Nine proſp'rous days we ply'd the lab'ring oar;
The tenth preſents our welcome native ſhore:
The hills diſplay the beacon's friendly light,
And riſing mountains gain upon our ſight.

Then

" plainly and diſtinctly." It is eaſy to perceive, that this is founded upon the noiſe the fires make which are incloſed in the caverns in this iſland, and that Homer alludes to the ancient name of it, which in the Phæacian language (Meloginin, as Bochart obſerves), ſignifies the land of thoſe who play upon inſtruments. We learn from Callimachus, in his hymn to Diana, that Lipara was originally called Meligounis. " She (Diana) went to find out the Cy-
" clops: ſhe found them in Lipara, for that is the name the iſle
" now bears, but anciently it was called Meligounis; they were
" labouring a huge maſs of red-hot iron, &c." So that Homer is not all invention, but adapts his poetry to tradition and ancient ſtory. *Dacier.*

Ver. 32. *The hills diſplay the beacon's friendly light.*] Euſtathius obſerves, that theſe fires were a kind of beacons kept continually burning, to direct navigators; the ſmoke gave notice by day, the light of the flame by night. Ithaca was invironed with rocks, and

Then firſt my eyes, by watchful toils oppreſt,
Comply'd to take the balmy gifts of reſt;
Then firſt my hands did from the rudder part,
(So much the love of home poſſeſs'd my heart)
When lo! on board a fond debate aroſe;
What rare device thoſe veſſels might incloſe?
What ſum, what prize from Æolus I brought?
Whilſt to his neighbour each expreſs'd his thought.
Say, whence, ye gods, contending nations ſtrive
Who moſt ſhall pleaſe, who moſt our hero give?
Long have his coffers groan'd with Trojan ſpoils;
Whilſt we, the wretched partn'ers of his toils,
Reproach'd by want, our fruitleſs labours mourn,
And only rich in barren fame return.
Now Æolus, ye ſee, augments his ſtore:
But come my friends, theſe myſtic gifts explore.
They ſaid: and (oh curs'd fate!) the thongs unbound!
The guſhing tempeſt ſweeps the ocean round;
Snatch'd in the whirl, the hurried navy flew,
The ocean widen'd and the ſhores withdrew.
Rous'd from my fatal ſleep, I long debate
If ſtill to live, or deſp'rate plunge to fate:
Thus doubting, proſtrate on the deck I lay,
'Till all the coward thoughts of death gave way.

conſequently there was a neceſſity for this care, to guide ſeafaring men to avoid thoſe rocks, and to point out the places of landing with ſecurity.

Ver. 55. *If ſtill to live, or deſp'rate plunge to fate.*] We ought not to infer from this paſſage, that Homer thought a perſon might lawfully take away his own life to avoid the greateſt dangers; what Ulyſſes here ſpeaks ariſes from the violence of a ſudden paſſion, and gives us a true picture of human nature: the wiſeſt of men are not free from the infirmity of paſſion, but reaſon corrects and ſubdues it. This is the caſe in the inſtance before us; Ulyſſes has ſo much of the man in him as to be liable to the paſſion of man; but ſo much virtue and wiſdom as to reſtrain and govern it.

Meanwhile

Meanwhile our veſſels plough the liquid plain,
And ſoon the known Æolian coaſt regain,
Our groans the rocks remurmur'd to the main.
We leap'd on ſhore, and with a ſcanty feaſt
Our thirſt and hunger haſtily repreſs'd;
That done, two choſen heralds ſtrait attend
Our ſecond progreſs to my royal friend:
And him amidſt his jovial ſons we found;
The banquet ſtreaming, and the goblets crown'd:
There humbly ſtopp'd with conſcious ſhame and awe,
Nor nearer than the gate preſum'd to draw.
But ſoon his ſons their well-known gueſt deſcry'd,
And ſtarting from their couches loudly cry'd,
Ulyſſes here! what dæmon couldſt thou meet
To thwart thy paſſage, and repel thy fleet?
Waſt thou not furniſh'd by our choiceſt care
For Greece, for home, and all thy ſoul held dear?
Thus they: in ſilence long my fate I mourn'd,
At length theſe words with accent low return'd.
Me, lock'd in ſleep, my faithleſs crew bereft
Of all the bleſſings of your god like gift!
But grant, oh grant our loſs we may retrieve:
A favour you, and you alone can give.
Thus I with art to move their pity try'd,
And touch'd the youths; but their ſtern ſire reply'd,
Vile wretch, be gone! this inſtant I command
Thy fleet accurs'd to leave our hallow'd land.

His

Ver. 83. *Vile wretch, be gone!*——] This inhoſpitable character of Æolus may ſeem contrary to the humane diſpoſition which Homer before aſcribed to him; he therefore tells us, that Ulyſſes appeared to him to be an object of divine vengeance, and that to give him aſſiſtance would be to act againſt the will of the gods. But, obſerves Euſtathius, is not this an ill choſen relation to be made to the Phæacians, as the critics have remarked, and might it not deter them from aſſiſting a man whom Æolus had rejected as an enemy to the gods? He anſwers, that it was evident to

His baneful ſuit pollutes theſe bleſs'd abodes,
Whoſe fate proclaims him hateful to the gods.
Thus fierce he ſaid: we ſighing went our way.
And with deſponding hearts put off to ſea.
The ſailors ſpent with toils their folly mourn,
But mourn in vain; no proſpect of return.
Six days and nights a doubtful courſe we ſteer,
The next proud Lamos' ſtately tow'rs appear,
And Læſtrigonia's gates ariſe diſtinct in air.
The ſhepherd quitting here at night the plain,
Calls, to ſucceed his cares, the watchful ſwain;
But he that ſcorns the chains of ſleep to wear,
And adds the herdſman's to the ſhepherd's care,
So near the paſtures, and ſo ſhort the way,
His double toils may claim a double pay,
And join the labours of the night and day.

to the Phæacians that Ulyſſes was no longer under the diſpleaſure of heaven, that the imprecations of Polypheme were fulfilled; he being to be tranſported to his own country by ſtrangers, according to his prayer in the ninth of the Odyſſey, and conſequently the Phæacians have nothing to fear from the aſſiſtance which they lend Ulyſſes.

Ver. 94. *The ſhepherd quitting here at night the plain,* &c.] This paſſage has been thought to be very difficult; but Euſtathius makes it intelligible: the land of the Læſtrigons was fruitful, and fit for paſturage; it was the practice to tend the ſheep by day, and the oxen by night; for it was infeſted by a kind of fly that was very grievous to the oxen by day, whereas the wool of the ſheep defended them from it: and therefore the ſhepherds drove their oxen to paſture by night. If the ſame ſhepherd, who watched the ſheep by day, could paſs the night without ſleep, and attend the oxen, he performed a double duty, and conſequently merited a double reward. Homer ſays, that the ways of the night and day were near to each other, that is, the paſture of the ſheep and oxen, and the ways that led to them, were adjacent; for the ſhepherd that drove his flocks home (or εἰσιλάων, as Homer expreſſes it), could call to the herdſman, who drove his herds to paſture, or ἐξελάων, and be heard with eaſe, and therefore the roads muſt be adjoining.

Within

Within a long receſs a bay there lies,
Edge'd round with cliffs high pointing to the ſkies;
The jutting ſhores that ſwell on either ſide
Contract its mouth, and break the ruſhing tide.
Our eager ſailors ſeize the fair retreat,
And bound within the port their crowded fleet:
For here retir'd the ſinking billows ſleep,
And ſmiling calmneſs ſilver'd o'er the deep.
I only in the bay refus'd to moor,
And fix'd, without, my halſers to the ſhore.
From thence we climb'd a point, whoſe airy brow
Commands the proſpect of the plains below:
No tracks of beaſts, or ſigns of men we found,
But ſmoky volumes rolling from the ground.
Two with our herald thither we command,
With ſpeed to learn what men poſſeſs'd the land.
They went, and kept the wheel's ſmooth beaten road
Which to the city drew the mountain wood;
When lo! they met, beſide a cryſtal ſpring,
The daughter of Antiphates the king;
She

Ver. 109. *I only in the bay refus'd to moor.*] It may appear at the firſt view, that Ulyſſes took more care of himſelf than of his companions; and it may be aſked, why did he not reſtrain them from entering the bay, when his caution plainly ſhews that he was apprehenſive of danger? Had he more fear than the reſt of the company; no; but a greater foreſight; a wiſe man provides as far as lies within his power againſt all contingencies, and the event ſhews, that his companions were raſh, and he wiſe to act with ſo much circumſpection; they ſtayed not for command, and therefore were juſtly puniſhed for acting precipitately without the direction of their general and king.

Ver. 120. *The daughter of Antiphates,* &c.] It is not evident from whence Ulyſſes had the knowledge of theſe particulars; the perſons whom he ſent to ſearch the land periſhed in the attempt, or were deſtroyed by the Læſtrigons: how then could this relation be made to Ulyſſes? It is probable that he had his information from

Circe

She to Artacia's ſilver ſtreams came down,
(Artacia's ſtreams alone ſupply the town:)
The damſel they approach, and aſk'd what race
The people were? who monarch of the place?
With joy the maid th' unwary ſtrangers heard,
And ſhew'd them where the royal dome appear'd.
They went; but as they ent'ring ſaw the queen
Of ſize enormous, and terrific mien,
(Not yielding to ſome bulky mountain's height)
A ſudden horrour ſtruck their aking ſight.
Swift at her call her huſband ſcour'd away
To wreck his hunger on the deſtin'd prey;
One for his food the raging glutton ſlew,
But two ruſh'd out, and to the navy flew.
Balk'd of his prey, the yelling monſter flies,
And fills the city with his hideous cries;
A ghaſtly band of giants hear the roar,
And pouring down the mountains, croud the ſhore.
Fragments they rend from off the craggy brow,
And daſh the ruins on the ſhips below:
The crackling veſſels burſt; hoarſe groans ariſe,
And mingled horrours echo to the ſkies;
The men, like fiſh, they ſtuck upon the flood,
And cram'd their filthy throats with human food.
Whilſt thus their fury rages at the bay,
My ſword our cables cut, I call'd to weigh;
And charge'd my men, as they from fate would fly,
Each nerve to ſtrain, each bending oar to ply.
The ſailors catch the word, their oars they ſeize,
And ſweep with equal ſtrokes the ſmoky ſeas;
Clear of the rocks th' impatient veſſel flies;
Whilſt in the port each wretch encumber'd dies.

Circe or Calypſo, for Circe in the ſequel of the Odyſſey tells Ulyſſes, that ſhe was acquainted with all the ſufferings that he had undergone by ſea; and if ſhe, as a goddeſs, knew his adventures, why might ſhe not relate to him theſe particulars?

With

With earneſt haſte my frighted ſailors preſs,
While kindling tranſports glow'd at our ſucceſs;
But the ſad fate that did our friends deſtroy,
Cool'd ev'ry breaſt, and damp'd the riſing joy.
Now dropp'd our anchors in th' Ææan bay,
Where Circe dwelt, the daughter of the day;
Her mother Persè, of old ocean's ſtrain,
Thus from the ſun deſcended, and the main;
(From the ſame lineage ſtern Æætes came,
The fair-fam'd brother of th' enchantreſs dame)
Goddeſs, and queen, to whom the pow'rs belong
Of dreadful magic, and commanding ſong.
Some god directing, to this peaceful bay
Silent we came, and melancholy lay,
Spent and o'erwatch'd. Two days and nights roll'd on,
And now the third ſucceeding morning ſhone,
I climb'd a cliff, with ſpear and ſword in hand,
Whoſe ridge o'erlook'd a ſhady length of land;
To learn if aught of mortal works appear,
Or chearful voice of mortal ſtrike the ear.
From the high point I mark'd, in diſtant view,
A ſtream of curling ſmoke, aſcending blue,
And ſpiry tops, the tufted trees above,
Of Circe's palace boſom'd in the grove.
Thither to haſte, the region to explore,
Was firſt my thought: but ſpeeding back to ſhore
I deem'd it beſt to viſit firſt my crew,
And ſend out ſpies the dubious coaſt to view.

Ver. 169. *I climb'd a cliff*———] Ulyſſes himſelf here takes a general view of the iſland, but ſends his companions for a more particular information; this was neceſſary to introduce the following ſtory, and give it an air of probability; if he had made the experiment in his own perſon, his virtue would have been proof againſt the ſorceries of Circe, and conſequently there could not have been room for a deſcription of her enchantments. *Euſtathius.*

As

As down the hill I ſolitary go,
Some pow'r divine who pities human woe,
Sent a tall ſtag, deſcending from the wood,
To cool his fervour in the cryſtal flood;
Luxuriant on the wave worn bank he lay,
Stretch'd forth, and panting in the ſunny ray.
I lanch'd my ſpear, and with a ſudden wound
Tranſpierce'd his back, and fix'd him to the ground.
He falls, and mourns his fate with human cries:
Thro' the wide wound the vital ſpirit flies.
I drew, and caſting on the river ſide
The bloody ſpear, his gather'd feet I try'd
With twining oſiers, which the bank ſupply'd.
An ell in length the pliant wiſp I weav'd,
And the huge body on my ſhoulders heav'd:
Then leaning on the ſpear with both my hands,
Up bore my load, and preſs'd the ſinking ſands
With weighty ſteps, 'till at the ſhip I threw
The welcome burden, and beſpoke my crew.
  Chear up, my friends! it is not yet our fate
To glide with ghoſts thro' Pluto's gloomy gate.
Food in the deſert land, behold! is giv'n,
Live, and enjoy the providence of heav'n.
  The joyful crew ſurvey his mighty ſize,
And on the future banquet feaſt their eyes,
As huge in length extended lay the beaſt;
Then waſh their hands, and haſten to the feaſt.
There, 'till the ſetting ſun roll'd down the light,
They ſat indulging in the genial rite.
When ev'ning roſe, and darkneſs cover'd o'er
The face of things, we ſlept along the ſhore.
But when the roſy morning warm'd the eaſt,
My men I ſummon'd, and theſe words addreſt.
  Followers and friends? attend what I propoſe:
Ye ſad companions of Ulyſſes' woes!

We know not here what land before us lies,
Or to what quarter now we turn our eyes,
Or where the ſun ſhall ſet, or where ſhall riſe.
Here let us think (if thinking be not vain)
If any counſel, any hope remain.
Alas! from yonder promontory's brow,
I view'd the coaſt, a region flat and low;
An iſle incircled with the boundleſs flood;
A length of thickets, and entangled wood.
Some ſmoke I ſaw amid the foreſt riſe,
And all around it only ſeas and ſkies!
With broken hearts my ſad companions ſtood;
Mindful of Cyclops and his human food,
And horrid Læſtrigons, the men of blood.
Preſaging tears apace began to rain;
But tears in mortal miſeries are vain.
In equal parts I ſtraight divide my band,
And name a chief each party to command;
I led the one, and of the other ſide
Appointed brave Eurylochus the guide.
Then in the brazen helm the lots we throw,
And fortune caſts Eurylochus to go:
He march'd, with twice eleven in his train:
Penſive they march, and penſive we remain.
The palace in a woody vale they found,
High rais'd of ſtone; a ſhaded ſpace around:

Ver. 220. *If any counſel, any hope remain*] This expreſſion may be thought unworthy of the mouth of a hero, and ſerve only to cauſe his companions to deſpair; but in reality it has a double effect; it gives us a lively picture of human nature, which in the greateſt men will ſhew ſome degrees of ſenſibility, and at the ſame time it arms his friends againſt ſurpriſe, and ſets the danger they are in full before their eyes, that they may proceed with due circumſpection. We do not find that Ulyſſes abandons himſelf to deſpair; he ſtill acts like a brave man, but joins wiſdom with bravery, and proceeds at once with the caution of a philoſopher, and the ſpirit of a hero.

Where mountain wolves and brindled lions roam,
(By magic tam'd) familiar to the dome.
With gentle blandiſhment our men they meet,
And wag their tails, and fawning lick their feet.
As from ſome feaſt a man returning late,
His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate.
Rejoicing round, ſome morſel to receive,
(Such as the good man ever uſed to give.)
Domeſtic thus the griſly beaſts drew near;
They gaze with wonder, not unmix'd with fear.
Now on the threſhold of the dome they ſtood,
And heard a voice reſounding thro' the wood:
Place'd at her loom within, the goddeſs ſung;
The vaulted roofs and ſolid pavement rung.
O'er the fair web the riſing figures ſhine,
Immortal labour! worthy hands divine.
Polites to the reſt the queſtion mov'd,
(A gallant leader, and a man I lov'd.)
What voice celeſtial, chanting to the loom
(Or nymph, or goddeſs) echoes from the room?
Say ſhall we ſeek acceſs? With that they call;
And wide unfold the portals of the hall.
The goddeſs riſing, aſks her gueſts to ſtay,
Who blindly follow where ſhe leads the way.
Eurylochus alone of all the band,
Suſpecting fraud, more prudently remain'd.
On thrones around with downy cov'rings grace'd,
With ſemblance fair th' unhappy men ſhe place'd.
Milk newly preſs'd, the ſacred flour of wheat,
And honey freſh, and Pramnian wines the treat:
But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl,
With drugs of force to darken all the ſoul:
Soon in the luſcious feaſt themſelves they loſt,
And drank oblivion of their native coaſt.
Inſtant her circling wand the goddeſs waves,
To hogs transforms 'em, and the ſty receives.

No

No more was ſeen the human form divine;
Head, face, and members, briſtle into ſwine:
Still curſt with ſenſe, their minds remain alone,
And their own voice affrights them when they groan.
Meanwhile the goddeſs in diſdain beſtows
The maſt and acorn, brutal food! and ſtrows
The fruits of cornel, as their feaſt, around;
Now prone and grov'ling on unſav'ry ground.
Eurylochus with penſive ſteps and ſlow,
Aghaſt returns; the meſſenger of woe,
And bitter fate. To ſpeak he made eſſay
In vain eſſay'd, nor would his tongue obey,
His ſwelling heart deny'd the words their way:
But ſpeaking tears the want of words ſupply,
And the full ſoul burſts copious from his eye.
Affrighted, anxious for our fellows fates,
We preſs to hear what ſadly he relates.

Ver. 278. *No more was ſeen the human form divine,* &c.] Longinus here reports a criticiſm of Zoilus; he is very pleaſant upon this transformation of the companions of Ulyſſes, and calls them "the "ſqueaking pigs of Homer;" we may gather from this inſtance the nature of his criticiſms, and conjecture that they tended to turn the fineſt incidents of Homer into ridicule. Burleſque was his talent, and inſtead of informing the reaſon by pointing out the errors of the poem, his only aim was to make his readers laugh; but he drew upon himſelf the indignation of all the learned world: he was known by the name of the vile Thracian ſlave, and lived in great want and poverty; and poſterity proſecutes his memory with the ſame animoſity. The man was really very learned, as Dionyſius Halicarnaſſus informs us: his morals were never reproached, and yet, as Vitruvius relates, he was crucified by Ptolemy, or, as others write, ſtoned to death, or burnt alive at Smyrna; ſo that his only crime was his defamation of Homer: a tragical inſtance of the great value which was ſet upon his poetry by antiquity, and of the danger of attacking a celebrated author with malice and envy.

We went, Ulyſſes! (ſuch was thy command) 295
Thro' the lone thicket, and the deſert land.

A

Ver. 295, &c. *We went, Ulyſſes! (ſuch was thy command.)*] We have here a very lively picture of a perſon in a great fright, which was admired, obſerves Euſtathius, by the ancients. There is not only a remarkable harmony in the flowing of the poetry, but the very manner of ſpeaking repreſents the diſorder of the ſpeaker; he is in too great an emotion to introduce his ſpeech by any preface; he breaks at once into it, without preparation, as if he could not ſoon enough deliver his thoughts. Longinus quotes theſe lines as an inſtance of the great judgement of Homer: there is nothing, ſays that critic, which gives more life to a diſcourſe, than the taking away the connections and conjunctions; when the diſcourſe is not bound together and embarraſſed, it walks and ſlides along of itſelf, and will want very little oftentimes of going faſter even than the thought of the orator: thus in Xenophon. "Joining their buck-"lers, they gave back, they fought, they ſlew, they dy'd toge-"ther;" of the ſame nature is that of Eurylochus.

We went, Ulyſſes—ſuch was thy command——
Acceſs we fought—nor was acceſs deny'd:
Radiant ſhe came—the portals open'd wide, &c.
I only wait behind—of all the train;
I waited long—and ey'd the doors in vain:
The reſt are vaniſh'd—none repaſs'd the gate.

Theſe periods thus cut off, and yet pronounced with precipitation, are ſigns of a lively ſorrow; which at the ſame time hinders, yet forces him to ſpeak.

Many ſuch ſudden tranſitions are to be found in Virgil, of equal beauty with this of Homer:

"Me, me, inquam qui feci, in me convertite tela."

Here the poet ſhews the earneſtneſs of the ſpeaker, who is in ſo much haſte to ſpeak, that his thoughts run to the end of the ſentence almoſt before his tongue can begin it. Thus Achæmenides in his flight from the Cyclops,

"——Per ſidera teſtor,
"Per ſuperos, atque hoc cœli ſpirabile lumen,
"Tollite me, Teucri."

Here the poet makes no connection with the preceding diſcourſe,

but

A palace in a woody vale we found
Brown with dark forests, and with shades around.

but leaves out the *inquit*, to express the precipitation and terror of Achæmenides.

But our countryman Spenser has equalled, if not surpassed these great poets of antiquity, in painting a figure of terror in the ninth canto of the Fairy Queen, where Sir Trevisan flies from despair.

He answer'd nought at all: but adding new
Fear to his first amazement, staring wide
With stony eyes, and heartless hollow hue,
Astonish'd stood, as one that had espy'd
Infernal furies, with their chains unty'd;
Him yet again, and yet again bespake
The gentle knight; who nought to him reply'd;
But trembling ev'ry joint did inly quake,
And falt'ring tongue, at last these words seem'd forth to shake,
For God's dear love, Sir Knight, do me not stay,
For lo! he comes, he comes, fast after me,
Eft looking back, would fain have run away.

The description sets the figure full before our eyes; he speaks short, and in broken and interrupted periods, which excellently represent the agony of his thoughts; and when he is a little more confirmed and emboldened, he proceeds,

And am I now in safety sure, quoth he,
From him who would have forced me to die?
And is the point of death now turn'd from me?
Then I may tell this hapless history.

We see he breaks out into interrogations, which, as Longinus observes, gives great motion, strength, and action to discourse. If the poet had proceeded simply, the expression had not been equal to the occasion; but by these short questions, he gives strength to it, and shews the disorder of the speaker, by the sudden starts and vehemence of the periods. The whole canto of despair is a piece of inimitable poetry; the picture of Sir Trevisan has a general resemblance to this of Eurylochus, and seems to have been copied after it, as will appear upon comparison.

A voice celeſtial echo'd from the dome,
Or nymph, or goddeſs, chanting to the loom.
Acceſs we ſought, nor was acceſs deny'd:
Radiant ſhe came; the portals open'd wide:
The goddeſs mild invites the gueſts to ſtay:
They blindly follow where ſhe leads the way.
I only wait behind of all the train;
I waited long, and ey'd the doors in vain:
The reſt are vaniſh'd, none repaſs'd the gate;
And not a man appears to tell their fate.
I heard, and inſtant o'er my ſhoulders flung
The belt in which my weighty falchion hung;
(A beamy blade) then ſeiz'd the bended bow,
And bade him guide the way, reſolv'd to go.
He, proſtrate falling, with both hands embrace'd
My knees, and weeping thus his ſuit addreſs'd.
O king belov'd of Jove! thy ſervant ſpare,
And ah, thyſelf the raſh attempt forbear!
Never, alas! thou never ſhalt return,
Or ſee the wretched for whoſe loſs we mourn.
With what remains from certain ruin fly,
And ſafe the few not fated yet to die.

Ver. 313. *With both hands embrace'd my knees* ——] The character of Eurylochus, who had married Climene the ſiſter of Ulyſſes, is the character of a brave man, who, being witneſs to the dreadful fate of his companions, is diffident of himſelf, and judges that the only way to conquer the danger is to fly from it. To fear upon ſuch an occaſion, obſerves Dacier, is not cowardice, but wiſdom. But what is more remarkable in this deſcription, is the art of Homer in inſerting the character of a brave man under ſo great a conſternation, to ſet off the character of Ulyſſes, who knows how at once to be bold and wiſe; for the more terrible and deſperate the adventure is repreſented by Eurylochus, the greater appears the intrepidity of Ulyſſes, who, truſting to his own wiſdom, and the aſſiſtance of the gods, has the courage to attempt it.

I anſwer'd ſtern. Inglorious then remain,
Here feaſt and loiter, and deſert thy train.
Alone, unfriended will I tempt my way;
The laws of fate compel, and I obey.
This ſaid, and ſcornful turning from the ſhore
My haughty ſtep, I ſtalk'd the valley o'er.
'Till now approaching nigh the magic bow'r,
Where dwelt th' enchantreſs ſkill'd in herbs of pow'r;
A form divine forth iſſu'd from the wood,
(Immortal Hermes with the golden rod)
In human ſemblance. On his bloomy face
Youth ſmil'd celeſtial, with each op'ning grace.
He ſeiz'd my hand, and gracious thus began.
Ah whither roam'ſt thou much enduring man!
O blind to fate! what led thy ſteps to rove
The horrid mazes of this magic grove?
Each friend you ſeek in yon' incloſure lies,
All loſt their form, and habitants of ſties.

Ver. 321. ——————*Inglorious then remain,*
Here feaſt and loiter——————]

This expreſſion is uſed ſarcaſtically by Ulyſſes, and in deriſion of his fears. Dacier remarks, that Ulyſſes having not ſeen what is related by Eurylochus, believes his refuſal to return, proceeds from his faint-heartedneſs: an inſtance, adds ſhe, that we frequently form wrong judgements of mens actions, when we are ignorant of the motives of them. I confeſs I am of opinion, that there is ſome degree of cowardice in the character of Eurylochus: a man truly brave would not expreſs ſuch confuſion and terror, in any extremity; he is not to be inſpirited either by Ulyſſes, or the example of his other companions, as appears from the ſequel, inſomuch that Ulyſſes threatens to kill him for a coward; this prevails over his firſt fears, and he ſubmits to meet a future danger, merely to avoid one that is preſent. What makes this obſervation more juſt is, that we never ſee a brave man drawn by Homer or Virgil in ſuch faint colours; but they always diſcover a preſence of mind upon all emergencies.

Think'ſt

Think'ſt thou by wit to model their eſcape?
Sooner ſhalt thou, a ſtranger to thy ſhape,
Fall prone their equal: firſt thy danger know,
Then take the antidote the gods beſtow.
The plant I give thro' all the direful bow'r
Shall guard thee, and avert the evil hour.
Now hear her wicked arts. Before thy eyes
The bowl ſhall ſparkle, and the banquet riſe;
Take this, nor from the faithleſs feaſt abſtain,
For temper'd drugs and poiſon ſhall be vain.
Soon as ſhe ſtrikes her wand, and gives the word,
Draw forth and brandiſh thy refulgent ſword,
And menace death: thoſe menaces ſhall move
Her alter'd mind to blandiſhment and love.
Nor ſhun the bleſſing proffer'd to thy arms,
Aſcend her bed, and taſte celeſtial charms:
So ſhall thy tedious toils a reſpite find,
And thy loſt friends return to human kind.
But ſwear her firſt by thoſe dread oaths that tie
The pow'rs below, the bleſſed in the ſky;
Leſt to thee naked ſecret fraud be meant,
Or magic bind thee, cold and impotent.

Thus while he ſpoke, the ſov'reign plant he drew,
Where on th' all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew,
And ſhew'd its nature and its wond'rous pow'r:
Black was its root, but milky-white the flow'r;
Moly the name, to mortals hard to find,
But all is eaſy to th' ætherial kind.
This Hermes gave, then gliding off the glade,
Shot to Olympus from the woodland ſhade.

While full of thought, revolving fates to come,
I ſpeed my paſſage to th' enchanted dome:
Arriv'd, before the lofty gates I ſtay'd;
The lofty gates the goddeſs wide diſplay'd;
She leads before, and to the feaſt invites;
I follow ſadly to the magic rites.

Radiant

Radiant with ſtarry ſtuds, a ſilver ſeat
Receiv'd my limbs; a footſtool eas'd my feet.
She mix'd the potion, fraudulent of ſoul;
The poiſon mantled in the golden bowl.
I took, and quaff'd it, confident in heav'n:
Then wav'd the wand, and then the word was giv'n.
Hence to thy fellows! (dreadful ſhe began)
Go, be a beaſt!—I heard and yet was man.
Then ſudden whirling like a waving flame,
My beamy falchion, I aſſault the dame.
Struck with unuſual fear, ſhe trembling cries,
She faints, ſhe falls; ſhe lifts her weeping eyes.
What art thou? ſay! from whence, from whom you came?
O more than human! tell thy race, thy name.
Amazing ſtrength, theſe poiſons to ſuſtain!
Not mortal thou, nor mortal is thy brain.
Or art thou he? the man to come (foretold
By Hermes pow'rful with the wand of gold)
The man from Troy, who wander'd ocean round;
The man for wiſdom's various arts renown'd,

Ver. 379. *I took, and quaff'd it, confident in heav'n.*] It may be aſked if Ulyſſes is not as culpable as his companions, in drinking this potion? Where lies the difference? and how is the allegory carried on, when Ulyſſes yields to the ſolicitation of Circe, that is pleaſure, and indulges, not reſiſts his appetites? The moral of the fable is, that all pleaſure is not unlawful, but the exceſs of it: we may enjoy, provided it be with moderation. Ulyſſes does not taſte till he is fortified againſt it; whereas his companions yielded without any care or circumſpection; they indulged their appetites only; Ulyſſes takes merely out of a deſire to deliver his aſſociates: he makes himſelf maſter of Circe, or pleaſure, and is not in the power of it, and enjoys it upon his own terms; they are ſlaves to it, and out of a capacity ever to regain their freedom but by the aſſiſtance of Ulyſſes. The general moral of the whole fable of Circe is, that pleaſure is as dreadful an enemy as danger, and a Circe as hard to be conquered as a Polypheme.

Ulyſſes?

Ulyſſes? oh! thy threat'ning fury ceaſe,
Sheath thy bright ſword, and join our hands in peace;
Let mutual joys our mutual truſt combine,
And love, and love-born confidence be thine.
And how, dread Circe! (furious I rejoin)
Can love, and love-born confidence be mine!
Beneath thy charms when my companions groan,
Transform'd to beaſts, with accents not their own.
O thou of fraudful heart! ſhall I be led
To ſhare thy feaſt-rites, or aſcend thy bed;
That, all unarm'd, thy vengeance may have vent,
And magic bind me, cold and impotent?
Celeſtial as thou art, yet ſtand deny'd;
Or ſwear that oath by which the gods are ty'd,
Swear, in thy ſoul no latent frauds remain,
Swear, by the vow which never can be vain.
The goddeſs ſwore: then ſeiz'd my hand, and led
To the ſweet tranſports of the genial bed.
Miniſtrant to their queen, with buſy care
Four faithful handmaids the ſoft rites prepare;
Nymphs

Ver. 403. ——*Shall I be led*
To ſhare thy feaſt-rites——]

Euſtathius obſerves, that we have here the picture of a man truly wiſe, who, when pleaſure courts him to indulge his appetites, not only knows how to abſtain, but ſuſpects it to be a bait to draw him into ſome inconveniencies: a man ſhould never think himſelf in ſecurity in the houſe of a Circe. It may be added, that theſe apprehenſions of Ulyſſes are not without a foundation; from this intercourſe with that goddeſs, Telegonus ſprung, who accidentally ſlew his father Ulyſſes.

Ver. 414. *Four faithful handmaids*, &c.] This large deſcription of the entertainment in the palace of Circe, is particularly judicious; Ulyſſes is in a houſe of pleaſure, and the poet dwells upon it, and ſhews how every circumſtance contributes to promote and advance it. The attendants are all nymphs, and the bath and perfumes uſher in the feaſt and wines. The four verſes that follow, are omitted by Dacier, and they are marked in Euſtathius as ſuperfluous;

Nymphs ſprung from fountains, or from ſhady woods,
Or the fair offspring of the ſacred floods.
One o'er the couches painted carpets threw,
Whoſe purple luſtre glow'd againſt the view:
White linen lay beneath. Another place'd
The ſilver ſtands with golden flaſkets grace'd:
With dulcet bev'rage this the beaker crown'd,
Fair in the midſt, with gilded cups around:
That in the tripod o'er the kindled pile
The water pours; the bubbling waters boil:
An ample vaſe receives the ſmoking wave;
And, in the bath prepar'd, my limbs I lave:
Reviving ſweets repair the mind's decay,
And take the painful ſenſe of toil away.
A veſt and tunic o'er me next ſhe threw,
Freſh from the bath and dropping balmy dew;
Then led and place'd me on the ſov'reign ſeat,
With carpets ſpread; a footſtool at my feet.
The golden ew'r a nymph obſequious brings,
Repleniſh'd from the cool tranſlucent ſprings;
With copious water the bright vaſe ſupplies
A ſilver laver of capacious ſize.
I waſh'd. The table in fair order ſpread,
They heap the glitt'ring canifters with bread;
Viands of various kinds allure the taſte,
Of choiceſt ſort and ſavour, rich repaſt!
Circe in vain invites the feaſt to ſhare;
Abſent I ponder, and abſorpt in care:

perfluous; they are to be found in other parts of the Odyſſey; but that, I confeſs, would be no argument why they ſhould not ſtand here, (ſuch repetitions being frequent in Homer), if they had a due propriety, but they contain a tautology. We ſee before a table ſpread for the entertainment of Ulyſſes, why then ſhould that circumſtance be repeated? If they are omitted, there will no chaſm or incoherence appear, and therefore probably they were not originally inſerted here by Homer.

While

While ſcenes of woe roſe anxious in my breaſt
The queen beheld me, and theſe words addreſt.
Why ſits Ulyſſes ſilent and apart,
Some hoard of grief cloſe harbour'd at his heart?
Untouch'd before thee ſtand the cates divine,
And unregarded laughs the roſy wine.
Can yet a doubt, or any dread remain,
When ſworn that oath which never can be vain?
I anſwer'd, Goddeſs! humane is thy breaſt,
By juſtice ſway'd, by tender pity preſt:
Ill fits it me, whoſe friends are ſunk to beaſts,
To quaff thy bowls, or riot in thy feaſts.
Me would'ſt thou pleaſe? for them thy cares employ,
And them to me reſtore, and me to joy.
With that, ſhe parted: in her potent hand
She bore the virtue of the magic wand.
Then haſt'ning to the ſties ſet wide the door,
Urge'd forth, and drove the briſtly herd before;
Unwieldy, out they ruſh'd, with general cry,
Enormous beaſts diſhoneſt to the eye.
Now touch'd by counter-charms, they change agen,
And ſtand majeſtic, and recall'd to men.
Thoſe hairs of late that briſtled ev'ry part,
Fall off; miraculous effect of art!
'Till all the form in full proportion riſe,
More young, more large, more graceful to my eyes.
They ſaw, they knew me, and with eager pace
Clung to their maſter in a long embrace:

Ver. 468. *More young,——more graceful to my eyes.*] Homer excellently carries on his allegory: he intends by this expreſſion of the enlargement of the beauty of Ulyſſes's companions, to teach that men who turn from an evil courſe, into the paths of virtue, excel even themſelves; having learned the value of virtue from the miſeries they ſuffered in purſuit of vice, they become new men, and as it were enjoy a ſecond life. *Euſtathius.*

Sad, pleaſing ſight! with tears each eye ran o'er,
And ſobs of joy re-echo'd thro' the bow'r:
Ev'n Circe wept, her adamantine heart
Felt pity enter, and ſuſtain'd her part.
Son of Laertes! (then the queen began)
Oh much-enduring, much-experience'd man!
Haſte to thy veſſel on the ſea-beat ſhore,
Unload thy treaſures, and the gally moor;
Then bring thy friends, ſecure from future harms,
And in our grottoes ſtow thy ſpoils and arms.
She ſaid. Obedient to her high command
I quit the place, and haſten to the ſtrand.
My ſad companions on the beach I found,
Their wiſtful eyes in floods of ſorrow drown'd.
As from freſh paſtures and the dewy field
(When loaded cribs their ev'ning banquet yield)
The lowing herds return; around them throng
With leaps and bounds their late-impriſon'd young,
Ruſh to their mothers with unruly joy,
And echoing hills return the tender cry:
So round me preſs'd exulting at my ſight,
With cries and agonies of wild delight,
The weeping ſailors; nor leſs fierce their joy
Than if return'd to Ithaca from Troy.
Ah maſter! ever honour'd, ever dear,
(Theſe tender words on ev'ry ſide I hear)
What other joy can equal thy return?
Not that lov'd country for whoſe ſight we mourn,
The ſoil that nurs'd us, and that gave us breath:
But ah! relate our loſt companions death.
I anſwer'd chearful. Haſte, your gally moor,
And bring our treaſures and our arms aſhore:
Thoſe in yon hollow caverns let us lay;
Then riſe and follow where I lead the way.
Your fellows live: believe your eyes, and come.
To take the joys of Circe's ſacred dome.

With ready ſpeed the joyful crew obey:
Alone Eurylochus perſuades their ſtay.
Whither (he cry'd) ah whither will ye run?
Seek ye to meet thoſe evils ye ſhou'd ſhun?
Will you the terrours of the dome explore,
In ſwine to grovel, or in lions roar,
Or wolf-like howl away the midnight hour
In dreadful watch around the magic bow'r?
Remember Cyclops, and his bloody deed;
The leader's raſhneſs made the ſoldiers bleed.
I heard incens'd, and firſt reſolv'd to ſpeed
My flying falchion at the rebel's head.
Dear as he was, by ties of kindred bound,
This hand had ſtretch'd him breathleſs on the ground;
But all at once my interpoſing train
For mercy pleaded, nor could plead in vain.
Leave here the man who dares his prince deſert,
Leave to repentance and his own ſad heart,
To guard the ſhip. Seek we the ſacred ſhades
Of Circe's palace, where Ulyſſes leads.
This with one voice declar'd the riſing train
Left the black veſſel by the murm'ring main.
Shame touch'd Eurylochus's alter'd breaſt,
He fear'd my threats, and followd with the reſt.
Meanwhile the goddeſs, with indulgent cares
And ſocial joys, the late transform'd repairs;
The bath, the feaſt, their fainting ſoul renews;
Rich in refulgent robes, and dropping balmy dews:
Bright'ning with joy their eager eyes behold
Each other's face, and each his ſtory told;
Then guſhing tears the narrative confound,
And with their ſobs the vaulted roofs reſound.
When huſh'd their paſſion, thus the goddeſs cries;
Ulyſſes, taught by labours to be wiſe;
Let this ſhort memory of grief ſuffice.

To

To me are known the various woes ye bore,
In ſtorms by ſea, in perils on the ſhore;
Forget whatever was in fortune's pow'r,
And ſhare the pleaſures of this genial hour.
Such be your minds as e'er ye left your coaſt,
Or learn'd to ſorrow for a country loſt.
Exiles and wand'rers now, where-e'er ye go,
Too faithful memory renews your woe;
The cauſe remov'd, habitual griefs remain,
And the ſoul ſaddens by the uſe of pain.
Her kind intreaty mov'd the gen'ral breaſt;
Tir'd with long toil, we willing ſunk to reſt.
We ply'd the banquet, and the bowl we crown'd,
'Till the full circle of the year came round.
But when the ſeaſons, following in their train,
Brought back the months, the days, and hours again;
As from a lethargy at once they riſe,
And urge their chief with animating cries.
Is this, Ulyſſes, our inglorious lot?
And is the name of Ithaca forgot?
Shall never the dear land in proſpect riſe,
Or the lov'd palace glitter in our eyes?
Melting I heard; yet 'till the ſun's decline
Prolong'd the feaſt, and quaff'd the roſy wine:
But when the ſhades came on at ev'ning hour,
And all lay ſlumb'ring in the duſky bow'r;
I came a ſuppliant to fair Circe's bed,
The tender moment ſeiz'd, and thus I ſaid.
Be mindful, goddeſs, of thy promiſe made;
Muſt ſad Ulyſſes ever be delay'd?
Around their lord my ſad companions mourn,
Each breaſt beats homeward, anxious to return:
If but a moment parted from thy eyes,
Their tears flow round me and my heart complies.
Go then (ſhe cry'd) ah go! yet think not I,
Not Circe, but the fates your wiſh deny.

Ah hope not yet to breathe thy native air!
Far other journey firſt demands thy care;
To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath,
And view the realms of darkneſs and of death.

Ver. 579. *Far other journey———*
To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath.]

There ſhould in all the epiſodes of epic poetry appear a convenience, if not a neceſſity of every incident; it may therefore be aſked what neceſſity there is for this deſcent of Ulyſſes into hell, to conſult the ſhade of Tireſias? Could not Circe, who was a goddeſs, diſcover to him all the future contingencies of his life? Euſtathius excellently anſwers this objection; Circe declares to Ulyſſes the neceſſity of conſulting Tireſias, that he may learn from the mouth of that prophet, that his death was to be from the ocean; ſhe acts thus in order to diſpoſe him to ſtay with her, after his return from the regions of the dead: or if ſhe cannot perſuade him to ſtay with her, that ſhe may at leaſt ſecure him from returning to her rival Calypſo; ſhe had promiſed immortality, but by this deſcent, he will learn that it is decreed that he ſhould receive his death from the ocean; for he died by the bone of a ſea-fiſh called Xiphias. Her love for Ulyſſes induces her not to make the diſcovery herſelf, for it was evident ſhe would not find credit, but Ulyſſes would impute it to her love, and the deſire ſhe had to deter him from leaving her iſland. This will appear more probable, if we obſerve the conduct of Circe in the future parts of the Odyſſey: ſhe relates to him the dangers of Scylla and Charybdis, of the oxen of Phœbus, and the Sirens; but ſays nothing concerning his death: this likewiſe gives an air of probability to the relation. The iſle of Circe was adjoining to Scylla and Charybdis, and conſequently ſhe may be ſuppoſed to be acquainted with thoſe places, and give an account of them to Ulyſſes with exactneſs, but ſhe leaves the decrees of heaven and the fate of Ulyſſes to the narration of the prophet, it beſt ſuiting his character to ſee into futurity. By the deſcent of Ulyſſes into hell may be ſignified, that a wiſe man ought to be ignorant of nothing; that he ought to aſcend in thought into heaven, and underſtand the heavenly appearances, and be acquainted with what is contained in the bowels of the earth, and bring to light the ſecrets of nature: that he ought to know the nature of the ſoul, what it ſuffers, and how it acts after it is ſeparated from the body. *Euſtathius.*

There

There ſeek the Theban bard, depriv'd of ſight;
Within, irradiate with prophetic light;
To whom Perſephone, entire and whole,
Gave to retain th' unſeparated ſoul:
The reſt are forms, of empty Æther made;
Impaſſive ſemblance, and a flitting ſhade.
Struck at the word, my very heart was dead:
Penſive I ſat; my tears bedew'd the bed;
To hate the light and life my ſoul begun,
And ſaw that all was grief beneath the ſun.
Compos'd at length, the guſhing tears ſuppreſt,
And my toſt limbs now weary'd into reſt,
How ſhall I tread (I cry'd) ah Circe! ſay,
The dark deſcent, and who ſhall guide the way?
Can living eyes behold the realms below?
What bark to waft me, and what wind to blow?
Thy fated road (the magick pow'r reply'd)
Divine Ulyſſes! aſks no mortal guide.
Rear but the maſt, the ſpacious ſail diſplay,
The northern winds ſhall wing thee on thy way.
Soon ſhalt thou reach old ocean's utmoſt ends,
Where to the main the ſhelving ſhore deſcends;

The

Ver. 602. *Soon ſhalt thou reach old ocean's utmoſt ends*, &c.] This whole ſcene is excellently imagined by the poet, as Eustathius obſerves; the trees are all barren, the place is upon the ſhores where nothing grows; and all the rivers are of a melancholy ſignification, ſuitable to the ideas we have of thoſe infernal regions. Ulyſſes arrives at this place, where he calls up the ſhades of the dead, in the ſpace of one day; from whence we may conjecture, that he means a place that lies between Cumæ and Baiæ, near the lake Avernus in Italy; which, as Strabo remarks, is the ſcene of the necromancy of Homer, according to the opinion of antiquity. He further adds, that there really are ſuch rivers as Homer mentions, though not placed in their true ſituation, according to the liberty allowable to poetry. Others write, that the Cimmerii once inhabited Italy, and that the famous cave of Pauſilipe was begun by them about the time of the Trojan wars: here they offered ſacrifice to

The barren trees of Proſerpine's black woods,
Poplars and willows trembling o'er the floods:
There fix thy veſſel in the lonely bay,
And enter there the kingdoms void of day:
Where Phlegeton's loud torrents ruſhing down,
Hiſs in the flaming gulf of Acheron;
And where, ſlow-rolling from the Stygian bed,
Cocytus' lamentable waters ſpread:
Where the dark rock o'erhangs th' infernal lake,
And mingling ſtreams eternal murmurs make.
Firſt draw thy falchion, and on ev'ry ſide
Trench the black earth a cubit long and wide:
To all the ſhades around libations pour,
And o'er th' ingredients ſtrow the hallow'd flour:
New wine and milk, with honey temper'd, bring,
And living water from the cryſtal ſpring
Then the wan ſhades and feeble ghoſts implore,
With promis'd off'rings on thy native ſhore;
A barren cow, the ſtatelieſt of the iſle,
And, heap'd with various wealth, a blazing pile:
Theſe to the reſt; but to the ſeer muſt bleed
A ſable ram, the pride of all thy breed,
Theſe ſolemn vows and holy offerings paid
To all the phantom-nations of the dead;
Be next thy care the ſable ſheep to place
Full o'er the pit, and hell-ward turn their face:
But from th' infernal rite thine eye withdraw,
And back to ocean glance with rev'rend awe.
Sudden ſhall ſkim along the duſky glades.
Thin airy ſhoals, and viſionary ſhades.
Then give command the ſacrifice to haſte,
Let the flay'd victims in the flame be caſt,

the manes, which might give occaſion to Homer's fiction. The Grecians, who inhabited theſe places after the Cimmerians, converted theſe dark habitations into ſtoves, baths, &c.

And

And ſacred vows, and myſtick ſong, apply'd
To griſly Pluto, and his gloomy bride.
Wide o'er the pool, thy falchion wav'd around
Shall drive the ſpectres from forbidden ground:
The ſacred draught ſhall all the dead forbear,
'Till awful from the ſhades ariſe the ſeer.
Let him, oraculous, the end, the way,
The turns of all thy future fate, diſplay,
Thy pilgrimage to come, and remnant of thy day.
So ſpeaking, from the ruddy orient ſhone
The morn conſpicuous on her golden throne.
The goddeſs with a radiant tunick dreſt
My limbs, and o'er me caſt a ſilken veſt.
Long flowing robes, of pureſt white, array
The nymph, that added luſtre to the day:
A tiar wreath'd her head with many a fold;
Her waſte was circled with a zone of gold.
Forth iſſuing then, from place to place I flew;
Rouſe man by man, and animate my crew.
Riſe, riſe my mates! 'tis Circe gives command:
Our journey calls us; haſte, and quit the land.
All riſe and follow, yet depart not all,
For fate decreed one wretched man to fall.
A youth there was, Elpenor was he nam'd,
Not much for ſenſe, nor much for courage fam'd;

Ver. 659. *A youth there was, Elpenor was he nam'd.*] Homer diſmiſſes not the deſcription of this houſe of pleaſure and debauch, without ſhewing the moral of his fable, which is the ill conſequences that attend thoſe who indulge themſelves in ſenſuality; this is ſet forth in the puniſhment of Elpenor. He deſcribes him as a perſon of no worth, to ſhew that debauchery enervates our faculties, and renders both the mind and body incapable of thinking, or acting with greatneſs and bravery. At the ſame time theſe circumſtantial relations are not without a good effect; for they render the ſtory probable, as if it were ſpoken with the veracity of an hiſtory, not the liberty of poetry.

The

The youngeſt of our band, a vulgar ſoul,
Born but to banquet, and to drain the bowl.
He, hot and careleſs, on a turret's height
With ſleep repair'd the long debauch of night:
The ſudden tumult ſtirr'd him where he lay,
And down he haſten'd, but forgot the way;
Full endlong from the roof the ſleeper fell,
And ſnapp'd the ſpinal joint, and wak'd in hell.
The reſt crowd round me with an eager look;
I met them with a ſigh, and thus beſpoke.
Already, friends! ye think your toils are o'er,
Your hopes already touch your native ſhore:
Alas! far otherwiſe the nymph declares,
Far other journey firſt demands our cares;
To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath,
The dreary realms of darkneſs and of death:
To ſeek Tireſias' awful ſhade below,
And thence our fortunes and our fates to know.
My ſad companions heard in deep deſpair;
Frantick they tore their manly growth of hair;
To earth they fell; the tears began to rain;
But tears in mortal miſeries are vain.

I will conclude this book with a paragraph from Plutarch's Morals: it is a piece of advice to the fair ſex, drawn from the ſtory of Circe and Ulyſſes. "They who bait their hooks (ſays this philoſopher), with intoxicated drugs, may catch fiſh with little "trouble; but then they prove dangerous to eat, and unpleaſant "to the taſte: thus women, who uſe arts to enſnare their admirers, become wives of fools and mad-men: they whom the ſorcereſs Circe enchanted, were no better than brutes; and ſhe "uſed them accordingly, incloſing them with ſties; but ſhe loved "Ulyſſes intirely, whoſe prudence avoided her intoxications, and "made his converſation agreeable. Thoſe women who will not "believe that Paſiphae was ever enamoured of a bull, are yet "themſelves ſo extravagant, as to abandon the ſociety of men of "ſenſe and temperance, and to betake themſelves to the embraces "of brutal and ſtupid fellows." Plut. Conjugal Precepts.

Sadly

Sadly they far'd along the ſea-beat ſhore;
Still heav'd their hearts, and ſtill their eyes ran o'er.
The ready victims at our bark we found,
The ſable ewe, and ram together bound.
For ſwift as thought, the goddeſs had been there,
And thence had glided, viewleſs as the air:
The paths of gods what mortal can ſurvey?
Who eyes their motion? who ſhall trace their way?

THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK XI.

THE ARGUMENT.

The deſcent into Hell.

Ulyſſes continues his narration; how he arrived at the land of the Cimmerians, and what ceremonies he performed to invoke the dead. The manner of his deſcent, and the apparition of the ſhades: his converſation with Elpenor, and with Tireſias, who informs him in a prophetic manner of his fortunes to come. He meets his mother Anticlea, from whom he learns the ſtate of his family. He ſees the ſhades of the antient heroines, afterwards of the heroes, and converſes in particular with Agamemnon and Achilles. Ajax keeps at a ſullen diſtance, and diſdains to anſwer him. He then beholds Tityus, Tantalus, Syſiphus, Hercules: till he is deterred from further curioſity by the apparition of horrid ſpectres, and the cries of the wicked in torments.

NOW to the ſhores we bend, a mournful train,
Climb the tall bark, and lanch into the main:
At once the maſt we rear, at once unbind
The ſpacious ſheet, and ſtretch it to the wind:
Then

* The antients called this book Νεκυομαντεία, or Νεκύα, the book of necromancy: becauſe (ſays Euſtathius), it contains an interview between Ulyſſes and the ſhades of the dead.

Virgil has not only borrowed the general deſign from Homer, but imitated many particular incidents: L'Abbé Fraguier in the Memoirs

Then pale and penſive ſtand, with cares oppreſt, 5
And ſolemn horrour ſaddens ev'ry breaſt.

A

Memoirs of Literature gives his judgement in favour of the Roman poet, and juſtly obſerves, that the end and deſign of the journey is more important in Virgil than in Homer. Ulyſſes deſcends to conſult Tireſias, Æneas his father. Ulyſſes takes a review of the ſhades of celebrated perſons that preceded his times, or whom he knew at Troy, who have no relation to the ſtory of the Odyſſey: Æneas receives the hiſtory of his own poſterity; his father inſtructs him how to manage the Italian war, and how to conclude it with honour; that is, to lay the foundations of the greateſt empire in the world; and the poet, by a very happy addreſs, takes an opportunity to pay a noble compliment to his patron Auguſtus. In the Æneid there is a magnificent deſcription of the deſcent and entrance into hell; and the "diſeaſes, cares, and terrors," that Æneas ſees in his journey, are very happily imagined, as an introduction into the regions of death: whereas in Homer there is nothing ſo noble; we ſcarce are able to diſcover the place where the poet lays his ſcene, or whether Ulyſſes continues below or above the ground. Inſtead of a deſcent into hell, it ſeems rather a conjuring up, or an evocation of the dead from hell; according to the words of Horace, who undoubtedly had this paſſage of Homer in his thoughts. Satyr viii. lib. 1.

"————Scalpere terram
"Unguibus, & pullam divellere mordicus agnam
"Cœperunt; cruor in foſſam confuſus, ut inde
"Manes elicerent, animas reſponſa daturas."

But if it be underſtood of an evocation only, how ſhall we account for ſeveral viſions and deſcriptions in the concluſion of this book? Ulyſſes ſees Tantalus in the waters of hell, and Siſyphus rolling a ſtone up an infernal mountain; theſe Ulyſſes could not conjure up, and conſequently muſt be ſuppoſed to have entered at leaſt the borders of thoſe infernal regions. In ſhort, Fraguier is of opinion, that Virgil profited more by the Frogs of Ariſtophanes than by Homer: and Mr. Dryden prefers the ſixth book of the Æneid to the eleventh of the Odyſſey, I think with very great reaſon.

I will take this opportunity briefly to mention the original of all theſe fictions of infernal rivers, judges, &c. ſpoken of by Homer, and repeated and enlarged by Virgil. They are of Ægyptian extract,

A freſhning breeze the * magick pow'r ſupply'd,
While th wing'd veſſel flew along the tide:
Our oars we ſhipp'd: all day the ſwelling ſails
Full from the guiding pilot catch'd the gales.

Now

tract, as Mr. Sandys (that faithful traveller, and judicious poet), obſerves, ſpeaking of the mummies of Memphis, p. 134.

"Theſe ceremonies performed, they laid the corpſe in a boat to "be wafted over Acheruſia, a lake on the ſouth of Memphis, by "one only perſon, whom they called Charon; which gave Or-"pheus the invention of his infernal ferryman; an ill-favoured "ſlovenly fellow, as Virgil deſcribes him, Æneid vi. About this "lake ſtood the ſhady temple of Hecate, with the ports of Cocy-"tus and Oblivion, ſeparated by bars of braſs, the original of like "fables. When landed on the other ſide, the bodies were brought "before certain judges: if convicted of an evil life, they were de-"prived of burial; if otherwiſe, they were ſuffered to be inter-"red." This explication ſhews the foundation of thoſe ancient fables of Charon, Rhadamanthus, &c. and alſo that the poets had a regard to truth in their inventions, and grounded even their fables upon ſome remarkable cuſtoms, which grew obſcure and abſurd, only becauſe the memory of the cuſtoms to which they allude is loſt to poſterity.

I will only add from Dacier, that this book is an evidence of the antiquity of the opinion of the ſoul's immortality. It is upon this that the moſt ancient of all divinations was founded, I mean that which was performed by the evocation of the dead. There is a very remarkable inſtance of this in the holy ſcripture, in an age not very diſtant from that of Homer. Saul conſults one of theſe infernal agents to call up Samuel, who appears, or ſome evil ſpirit in his form, and predicts his impending death and calamities. This is a pregnant inſtance of the antiquity of necromancy, and that it was not of Homer's invention; it prevailed long before his days among the Chaldeans, and ſpread over all the oriental world. Æſchylus has a tragedy intitled Perſæ, in which the ſhade of Darius is called up, like that of Samuel, and foretells Queen Atoſſa all her misfortunes. Thus it appears that there was a foundation for what Homer writes; he only embelliſhes the opinions of antiquity with the ornaments of poetry.

I muſt

* Circe.

Now ſunk the ſun from his aerial height,
And o'er the ſhaded billows ruſh'd the night:
When lo! we reach'd old ocean's utmoſt bounds,
Where rocks controll his waves with ever-during mounds.
There in a lonely land, and gloomy cells,
The duſky nation of Cimmeria dwells;
The ſun ne'er views the uncomfortable ſeats,
When radiant he advances, or retreats:
Unhappy race! whom endleſs night invades,
Clouds the dull air, and wraps them round in ſhades.
The ſhip we moor on theſe obſcure abodes;
Diſ-bark the ſheep, an off'ring to the gods;

I muſt confeſs that Homer gives a miſerable account of a future ſtate; there is not a perſon deſcribed in happineſs, unleſs perhaps it be Tireſias: the good and the bad ſeem all in the ſame condition: whereas Virgil has an hell for the wicked, and an Elyſium for the juſt. Though perhaps it may be a vindication of Homer to ſay, that the notions of Virgil of a future ſtate were different from thoſe of Homer; according to whom hell might only be a receptacle for the vehicles of the dead, and that while they were in hell, their φρὴν or ſpirit might be in heaven, as appears from what is ſaid of the εἴδωλον of Hercules in this xith book of the Odyſſey.

Ver. 15. *There in a lonely land, and gloomy cells,*
The duſky nation of Cimmeria dwells.]

It is the opinion of many commentators, that Homer conſtantly in theſe voyages of Ulyſſes makes uſe of a fabulous geography; but perhaps the contrary opinion in many places may be true: in this paſſage, Ulyſſes in the ſpace of one day ſails from the iſland of Circe to the Cimmerians: now it is very evident from Herodotus and Strabo, that they inhabited the regions near the Boſphorus, and conſequently Ulyſſes could not ſail thither in the compaſs of a day; and therefore, ſays Strabo, the poet removes not only the Cimmerians, but their climate and darkneſs, from the northern Boſphorus into Campania in Italy.

But that there really were a people in Italy named Cimmerians is evident from the teſtimony of many authors. So Lycophron plainly underſtands this paſſage, and relates theſe adventures as performed in Italy.

And hell-ward bending, o'er the beach deſcry
The doleſome paſſage to th' infernal ſky.
The victims, vow'd to each Tartarean pow'r,
Eurylochus and Perimedes bore.
Here open'd hell, all hell I here implor'd,
And from the ſcabbard drew the ſhining ſword;
And trenching the black earth on ev'ry ſide,
A cavern form'd, a cubit long and wide.
New wine, with honey-temper'd milk we bring,
Then living waters from the cryſtal ſpring;
O'er theſe was ſtrew'd the conſecrated flour,
And on the ſurface ſhone the holy ſtore.
Now the wan ſhades we hail, th' infernal gods,
To ſpeed our courſe, and waft us o'er the floods:
So ſhall a barren heifer from the ſtall
Beneath the knife upon your altars fall;
So in our palace, at our ſafe return
Rich with unnumber'd gifts the pile ſhall burn;
So ſhall a ram the largeſt of the breed,
Black as theſe regions, to Tireſias bleed.
Thus ſolemn rites and holy vows we paid
To all the phantom nations of the dead.
Then dy'd the ſheep; a purple torrent flow'd,
And all the caverns ſmok'd with ſtreaming blood.
When lo! appear'd along the duſky coaſts,
Thin, airy ſhoals of viſionary ghoſts;

Fair,

Ver. 47. *When lo! appear'd along the duſky coaſts,*
Thin, airy ſhoals of viſionary ghoſts.]

We are informed by Euſtathius, that the ancients rejected theſe ſix verſes; for, ſay they, theſe are not the ſhades of perſons newly ſlain, but who have long been in theſe infernal regions: how then can their wounds be ſuppoſed ſtill to be viſible, eſpecially through their armour, when the ſoul was ſeparated from the body? Neither is this the proper place for their appearance, for the poet immediately ſubjoins, that the ghoſt of Elpenor was the firſt that he encountered in theſe regions of darkneſs. But theſe objections will

Fair, penſive youths, and ſoft enamour'd maids;
And wither'd elders, pale and wrinkled ſhades;
Ghaſtly with wounds the forms of warriours ſlain
Stalk'd with majeſtick port, a martial train:
Theſe and a thouſand more ſwarm'd o'er the ground,
And all the dire aſſembly ſhriek'd around.
Aſtoniſh'd at the ſight, aghaſt I ſtood,
And a cold fear ran ſhiv'ring thro' my blood;

will be eaſily anſwered by having recourſe to the notions which the antients entertained concerning the dead; we muſt remember that they imagined that the ſoul, though freed from the body, had ſtill a vehicle, exactly reſembling the body; as the figure in a mould retains the reſemblance of the mould, when ſeparated from it; the body is but as a caſe to this vehicle, and it is in this vehicle that the wounds are ſaid to be viſible; this was ſuppoſed to be leſs groſs than the mortal body, and leſs ſubtil than the ſoul; ſo that whatever wounds the outward body received when living, were believed to affect this inward ſubſtance, and conſequently might be viſible after ſeparation.

It is true that the poet calls the ghoſt of Elpenor the firſt ghoſt, but this means the firſt whom he knew: Elpenor was not yet buried, and therefore was not yet received into the habitation of the dead, but wanders before the entrance of it. This is the reaſon why his ſhade is ſaid to preſent itſelf the foremoſt: it comes not up from the realm of death, but deſcends towards it from the upper world.

But theſe ſhades of the warriors are ſaid ſtill to wear their armour in which they were ſlain, for the poet adds that it was ſtained with blood: how is it poſſible for theſe ghoſts, which are only a ſubtil ſubſtance, not a groſs body, to wear the armour they wore in the other world? How was it conveyed to them in theſe infernal regions? All that occurs to me in anſwer to this objection is, that the poet deſcribes them ſuitably to the characters they bore in life; the warriors on earth are warriors in hell; and that he adds theſe circumſtances only to denote the manner of their death, which was in battle or by the ſword. No doubt but Homer repreſents a future ſtate according to the notions which his age entertained of it, and this ſufficiently juſtifies him as a poet, who is not obliged to write truths, but according to fame and common opinions.

Straight I command the ſacrifice to haſte,
Straight the ſlay'd victims to the flames are caſt,
And mutter'd vows, and myſtic ſong apply'd
To griſly Pluto, and his glo my bride.
Now ſwift I wav'd my falchion o'er the blood;
Back ſtarted the pale throngs, and trembling ſtood.
Round the black trench the gore untaſted flows,
'Till awful from the ſhades Tireſias roſe.
There, wand'ring thro' the gloom I firſt ſurvey'd,
New to the realms of death, Elpenor's ſhade:
His cold remains all naked to the ſky
On diſtant ſhores unwept, unburied lie.
Sad at the ſight I ſtand, deep fix'd in woe,
And e'er I ſpoke the tears began to flow.
O ſay what angry pow'r Elpenor led
To glide in ſhades, and wander with the dead?
How could thy ſoul, by realms and ſeas disjoin'd,
Out fly the nimble ſail, and leave the lagging wind?
The ghoſt reply'd: To hell my doom I owe,
Dæmons accurſt, dire miniſters of woe!
My feet thro' wine unfaithful to their weight,
Betray'd me tumbling from a tow'ry height,
Stagg'ring I reel'd, and as I reel'd I fell,
Lux'd the neck joint—my ſoul deſcends to hell.
But lend me aid, I now conjure thee lend,
By the ſoft tie and ſacred name of friend!
By the fond conſort! by thy father's cares!
By lov'd Telemachus's blooming years!
For well I know that ſoon the heav'nly pow'rs
Will give thee back to day, and Circe's ſhores:
There pious on my cold remains attend,
There call to mind thy poor departed friend,
The tribute of a tear is all I crave,
And the poſſeſſion of a peaceful grave.
But if unheard, in vain compaſſion plead,
Revere the gods, the gods avenge the dead!

A tomb along the wat'ry margin raiſe,
The tomb with manly arms and trophies grace,
To ſhew poſterity Elpenor was.
There high in air, memorial of my name,
Fix the ſmooth oar, and bid me live to fame.
To whom with tears; Theſe rites, oh mournful ſhade,
Due to thy ghoſt, ſhall to thy ghoſt be paid.
Still as I ſpoke the phantom ſeem'd to moan,
Tear follow'd tear, and groan ſucceeded groan.
But as my waving ſword the blood ſurrounds,
The ſhade withdrew, and mutter'd empty ſounds.
There as the wond'rous viſions I ſurvey'd,
All pale aſcends my royal mother's ſhade:
A queen, to Troy ſhe ſaw our legions paſs;
Now a thin form is all Anticlea was!
Struck at the ſight I melt with filial woe,
And down my cheek the pious ſorrows flow,

Ver. 105. *All pale aſcends my royal mother's ſhade.*] The behaviour of Ulyſſes with reſpect to his mother may appear not ſufficiently tender and affectionate; he refrains all manner of addreſs to her, a conduct which may be cenſured as inconſiſtent with filial piety; but Plutarch very fully anſwers this objection. "It is (ſays that "author), a remarkable inſtance of the prudence of Ulyſſes, who, "deſcending into the regions of the dead, refuſed all conference "even with his mother, till he had obtained an anſwer from Ti-"reſias, concerning the buſineſs which induced him to undertake "that infernal journey." A wiſe man is not inquiſitive about things impertinent; accordingly Ulyſſes firſt ſhews himſelf a wiſe man, and then a dutiful ſon. Beſides, it is very judicious in Homer thus to deſcribe Ulyſſes: the whole deſign of the Odyſſey is the return of Ulyſſes to his country; this is the mark at which the hero ſhould continually aim, and therefore it is neceſſary that all other incidents ſhould be ſubordinate to this; and the poet had been blameable, if he had ſhewed Ulyſſes entertaining himſelf with amuſements, and poſtponing the conſideration of the chief deſign of the Odyſſey. Lucian ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe in his piece upon aſtrology.

Yet as I ſhook my falchion o'er the blood,
Regardleſs of her ſon the parent ſtood.
When lo! the mighty Theban I behold;
To guide his ſteps he bore a ſtaff of gold;
Awful he trod! majeſtic was his look!
And from his holy lips theſe accents broke.
Why, mortal, wand'reſt thou from chearful day,
To tread the downward melancholy way?
What angry gods to theſe dark regions led
Thee yet alive companion of the dead?
But ſheath thy poniard, while my tongue relates
Heav'n's ſtedfaſt purpoſe, and thy future fates.
Whilſt yet he ſpoke, the prophet I obey'd,
And in the ſcabbard plunge'd the glitt'ring blade:
Eager he quaff'd the gore, and then expreſt
Dark things to come, the counſels of his breaſt.
Weary of light, Ulyſſes here explores,
A proſp'rous voyage to his native ſhores;
But know—by me unerring fates diſcloſe
New trains of dangers, and new ſcenes of woes;
I ſee! I ſee, thy bark by Neptune toſt,
For injur'd Cyclops, and his eye-ball loſt!
Yet to thy woes the gods decree an end,
If heav'n thou pleaſe; and how to pleaſe attend!
Where on Trinacrian rocks the ocean roars,
Graze num'rous herds along the verdant ſhores;

Ver. 120. *But ſheath thy poniard.*———] The terror which the ſhades of the departed expreſs at the ſight of the ſword of Ulyſſes has been frequently cenſured as abſurd and ridiculous: "Riſum "cui non moveat, (ſays Scaliger), cum enſem ait & vulnera me-"tuiſſe?" What have the dead to fear from a ſword, who are beyond the power of it, by being reduced to an incorporeal ſhadow? But this deſcription is conſiſtent with the notions of the antients concerning the dead. I have already remarked, that the ſhades retained a venicle, which reſembled the body, and was liable to pain as well as the corporeal ſubſtance; if not, to what purpoſe are the furies deſcribed with iron ſcourges, or the vulture tearing the liver of Tityus?

Tho'

Tho' hunger preſs, yet fly the dang'rous prey,
The herds are ſacred to the god of day,
Who all ſurveys with his extenſive eye,
Above, below, on earth and in the ſky!
Rob not the god, and ſo propitious gales
Attend thy voyage, and impel thy ſails:
But if his herds ye ſeize, beneath the waves
I ſee thy friends o'erwhelm'd in liquid graves!
The direful wreck Ulyſſes ſcarce ſurvives!
Ulyſſes at his country ſcarce arrives!
Strangers thy guides! nor there thy labours end,
New foes ariſe, domeſtic ills attend!
There foul adult'rers to thy bride reſort,
And lordly gluttons riot in thy court.
But vengeance haſtes amain! Theſe eyes behold
The deathful ſcene, princes on princes roll'd!
That done, a people far from ſea explore,
Who ne'er knew ſalt, or heard the billows roar,
Or ſaw gay veſſel ſtem the wat'ry plain,
A painted wonder flying on the main!
Bear on thy back an oar: with ſtrange amaze
A ſhepherd meeting thee, the oar ſurveys,
And names a van: there fix it on the plain,
To calm the god that holds the wat'ry reign;

Ver. 145. *Ulyſſes at his country ſcarce arrives!*] The poet conducts this interview with admirable judgement. The whole deſign of Ulyſſes is to engage the Phæacians in his favour, in order to his tranſportation to his own country: how does he bring this about? By ſhewing that it was decreed by the gods that he ſhould be conducted thither by ſtrangers; ſo that the Phæacians immediately conclude, that they are the people deſtined by heaven to conduct him home; to give this the greater weight, he puts the ſpeech into the mouth of the prophet Tireſias, and exalts his character in an extraordinary manner, to ſtrengthen the credit of the prediction: by this method likewiſe the poet interweaves his epiſode into the texture and eſſence of the poem, he makes his journey into hell contribute to the reſtoration of his hero, and unites the ſubordinate parts very happily with the main action.

A threefold off'ring to his altar bring,
A bull, a ram, a boar; and hail the ocean king.
But home return'd, to each ætherial pow'r
Slay the due victim in the genial hour:
So peaceful ſhalt thou end thy bliſsful days,
And ſteal thyſelf from life by ſlow decays:
Unknown to pain, in age reſign thy breath,
When late ſtern Neptune points the ſhaft with death:
To the dark grove retiring as to reſt,
Thy people bleſſing, by thy people bleſt!
Unerring truths, oh man, my lips relate;
This is thy life to come, and this is fate.

Ver. 167. *When late ſtern Neptune points the ſhaft with death.*] The death of Ulyſſes is related variouſly, but the following account is chiefly credited: Ulyſſes had a ſon by Circe named Telegonus, who, being grown to years of maturity, ſailed to Ithaca in ſearch of his father; where, ſeizing ſome ſheep for the uſe of his attendants, the ſhepherds put themſelves into a poſture to reſcue them; Ulyſſes, being advertiſed of it, went with his ſon Telemachus to repel Telegonus, who, in defending himſelf, wounded Ulyſſes, not knowing him to be his father. Thus Oppian, Hyginus, and Dictys relate the ſtory. Many poets have brought this upon the ſtage, and Ariſtotle, criticiſing upon one of theſe tragedies, gives us the title of it, which was, "Ulyſſes Wounded." But if Ulyſſes thus died, how can Neptune be ſaid to "point the ſhaft with "death?" We are informed that the ſpear, with which Telegonus gave the wound, was pointed with the bone of a ſea turtle; ſo that literally his death came from the ſea, or ἐξ ἁλὸς: and Neptune being the god of the ocean, his death may without violence be aſcribed to that deity. It is true, ſome critics read ἐξάλοο as one word, and then it will ſignify that Ulyſſes ſhould eſcape the dangers of the ſea, and die upon the continent far from it; but the former ſenſe is moſt conſonant to the tenor of the poem, through which Neptune is conſtantly repreſented as an enemy to Ulyſſes.

I will only add the reaſon why Ulyſſes is injoined to offer a bull, a ram, and a boar to Neptune: the bull repreſents the roaring of the ſea in ſtorms; the ram the milder appearance of it when in tranquillity: the boar was uſed by the antients as an emblem of fecundity, to repreſent the fruitfulneſs of the ocean. This particular ſacrifice of three animals was called τριτὼ ὑα. *Euſtathius.*

To

To whom unmov'd: If this the gods prepare;
What heav'n ordains, the wife with courage bear.
But ſay, why yonder on the lonely ſtrands,
Unmindful of her ſon, Anticlea ſtands?
Why to the ground ſhe bends her downcaſt eye?
Why is ſhe ſilent, while her ſon is nigh?
The latent cauſe, oh ſacred ſeer, reveal!
Nor this, replies the ſeer, will I conceal.
Know; to the ſpectres, that thy bev'rage taſte,
The ſcenes of life recur, and actions paſt;
They, ſeal'd with truth, return the ſure reply;
The reſt, repell'd, a train oblivious fly.
The phantom-prophet ceas'd, and ſunk from ſight
To the black palace of eternal night.
Still in the dark abodes of death I ſtood,
When near Anticla mov'd, and drank the blood.
Straight all the mother in her ſoul awakes,
And owning her Ulyſſes, thus ſhe ſpeaks.
Com'ſt thou, my ſon, alive, to realms beneath,
The doleſome realms of darkneſs and of death:
Com'ſt thou alive from pure, ætherial day?
Dire is the region, diſmal is the way!
Here lakes profound, there floods oppoſe their waves,
There the wide ſea with all his billows raves!
Or (ſince to duſt proud Troy ſubmits her tow'rs)
Com'ſt thou a wand'rer from the Phrygian ſhores?
Or ſay, ſince honour call'd thee to the field,
Haſt thou thy Ithaca, thy bride beheld?
Source of my life, I cry'd, from earth I fly
To ſeek Tireſias in the nether ſky,
To learn my doom: for toſt from woe to woe,
In ev'ry land Ulyſſes finds a foe:
Nor have theſe eyes beheld my native ſhores,
Since in the duſt proud Troy ſubmits her tow'rs.
But, when my ſoul from her ſweet manſion fled,
Say, what diſtemper gave thee to the dead?

Has

Has life's fair lamp declin'd by ſlow decays,
Or ſwift expir'd it in a ſudden blaze?
Say, if my ſire, good old Laertes, lives?
If yet Telemachus, my ſon, ſurvives!
Say, by his rule is my dominion aw'd,
Or cruſh'd by traitors with an iron rod?
Say, if my ſpouſe maintains her royal truſt,
Tho' tempted chaſte, and obſtinately juſt?
Or if no more her abſent lord ſhe wails,
But the falſe woman o'er the wife prevails?
Thus I, and thus the parent ſhade returns.
Thee, ever thee, thy faithful conſort mourns:
Whether the night deſcends, or day prevails,
Thee ſhe by night, and thee by day bewails,
Thee in Telemachus thy realm obeys;
In ſacred groves celeſtial rites he pays,
And ſhares the banquet in ſuperiour ſtate,
Grace'd with ſuch honours as become the great.
Thy ſire in ſolitude foments his care:
The court is joyleſs, for thou art not there!

Ver. 218. ——— *Thus the parent ſhade returns.*] The queſtions which Ulyſſes aſks, (remarks Euſtathius), could not fail of having a very good effect upon his Phæacian audience: by them he very artfully (and, as it ſeems, undeſigned), lets them into the knowledge of his dignity, and ſhews the importance of his perſon; to induce them to a greater care to conduct him to his country. The proceſs of the whole ſtory is ſo artfully carried on, that Ulyſſes ſeems only to relate an accidental interview, while he tacitly recommends himſelf, and lets them know the perſon who aſks their aſſiſtance is a king. It is obſervable that Anticlea inverts the order in her anſwer, and replies laſt to the firſt queſtion. Orators always reſerve the ſtrongeſt argument for the concluſion, to leave it freſh upon the memory of their auditors; or rather, the poet uſes this method to introduce the ſorrow of Ulyſſes for the death of his mother more naturally: he ſteals away the mind of the reader from attending the main action, to enliven it with a ſcene of tenderneſs and affection in theſe regions of horror.

No

No coſtly carpets raiſe his hoary head,
No rich embroid'ry ſhines to grace his bed:
Ev'n when keen winter freezes in the ſkies,
Rank'd with his ſlaves, on earth the monarch lies,
Deep are his ſighs, his viſage pale, his dreſs
The garb of woe and habit of diſtreſs.
And when the autumn takes his annual round,
The leafy honours ſcatt'ring on the ground;
Regardleſs of his years, abroad he lies,
His bed the leaves, his canopy the ſkies.
Thus cares on cares his painful days conſume,
And bow his age with ſorrow to the tomb!
For thee my ſon, I wept my life away;
For thee thro' hell's eternal dungeons ſtray:
Nor came my fate by ling'ring pains and ſlow,
Nor bent the ſilver-ſhafted queen her bow;
No dire diſeaſe bereav'd me of my breath;
Thou, thou my ſon wert my diſeaſe and death;
Unkindly with my love my ſon conſpir'd,
For thee I liv'd, for abſent thee expir'd.
Thrice in my arms I ſtrove her ſhade to bind,
Thrice thro' my arms ſhe ſlipt like empty wind,
Or dreams, the vain illuſions of the mind.

Wild

Ver. 248. *Thrice in my arms I ſtrove her ſhade to bind,*
Thrice thro' my arms———]

This paſſage plainly ſhews that the vehicles of the departed were believed by the antients to be of an aerial ſubſtance, and retain nothing of corporeal groſſneſs.

Virgil has borrowed theſe verſes.

" Ter conatus ibi collo dare brachia circum;
" Ter fruſtra comprenſa manus effugit imago,
" Par levibus ventis, volucrique ſimillima ſomno."

Scaliger gives the preference to the Roman poet, becauſe he uſes three verſes, at a time when the word *ter* occurs in the deſcription, whereas Homer concludes in little more than two lines. But this

is

Wild with deſpair, I ſhed a copious tide
Of flowing tears, and thus with ſighs reply'd.
Fly'ſt thou, lov'd ſhade, while I thus fondly mourn?
Turn to my arms, to my embraces turn!
Is it, ye pow'rs that ſmile at human harms!
Too great a bliſs to weep within her arms?
Or has hell's queen an empty image ſent,
That wretched I might ev'n my joys lament?
O ſon of woe, the penſive ſhade rejoin'd
Oh moſt inur'd to grief of all mankind!
'Tis not the queen of hell who thee deceives:
All, all are ſuch, when life the body leaves;
No more the ſubſtance of the man remains,
Nor bounds the blood along the purple veins:
Theſe funereal flames in atoms bear,
To wander with the wind in empty air;
While the impaſſive ſoul reluctant flies,
Like a vain dream, to theſe infernal ſkies.
But from the dark dominions ſpeed thy way,
And climb the ſteep aſcent to upper day;
To thy chaſte bride the wond'rous ſtory tell,
The woes, the horrours, and the laws of hell.
Thus while he ſpoke, in ſwarms hell's empreſs brings
Daughters and wives of heroes and of kings;
Thick and more thick they gather round the blood,
Ghoſt throng'd on ghoſt (a dire aſſembly) ſtood!
Dauntleſs my ſword I ſeize: the airy crew,
Swift as it flaſh'd along the gloom, withdrew;

is not criticiſing, but trifling; and aſcribing to an author what the author himſelf had no thought of. This puts me in mind of a ſtory in Lucian, where a perſon of a ſtrong imagination, thinking there was a myſtery in μῆνιν, the firſt word in the Iliad, is introduced enquiring of Homer in the regions of the dead, why he placed it in the beginning of his poem? he anſwers, Becauſe it firſt came into his head. I doubt not but the number of the lines in this place in both poets was equally accidental; Virgil adds nothing to the thought of Homer, though he uſes more words.

Then ſhade to ſhade in mutual forms ſucceeds,
Her race recounts, and their illuſtrious deeds.
Tyro began: whom great Salmoneus bred;
The royal partner of fam'd Cretheus' bed.
For fair Enipeus, as from fruitful urns
He pours his wat'ry ſtore, the virgin burns:

Ver. 279. *Then ſhade to ſhade——ſucceeds.*] Nothing can better ſhew the invention of Homer, than his capacity of furniſhing out a ſcene of ſuch great variety in this infernal region. He calls up the heroes of former ages from a ſtate of inexiſtence to adorn and diverſify his poetry. If it be aſked what relation this journey into hell has to the main action of the Odyſſey? the anſwer is, It has an epiſodic affinity with it, and ſhews the ſufferings of Ulyſſes more than any of his voyages upon the ocean, as it is more horrible and full of terrors. What a treaſury of ancient hiſtory and fables has he opened by this deſcent? He lets us into a variety of different characters of the moſt famous perſonages recorded in ancient ſtory; and at the ſame time lays before us a ſupplement to the Iliad. If Virgil paid a happy piece of flattery to the Romans, by introducing the greateſt perſons of the beſt families in Rome, in his deſcent in the Æneid; Homer no leſs happily intereſts the Grecians in his ſtory, by honouring the anceſtors of the nobleſt families who ſtill flouriſhed in Greece, in the Odyſſey; a circumſtance that could not fail of being very acceptable to a Grecian or Roman reader, but perhaps leſs entertaining to us, who have no particular intereſt in theſe ſtories.

Ver. 281. *Tyro——whom great Salmoneus bred.*] Virgil gives a very different character of Salmoneus from this of Homer: he deſcribes him as an impious perſon who preſumed to imitate the thunder of Jupiter, whereas Homer ſtiles him blameleſs, or ἀμύμων; an argument, ſays Euſtathius, that the preceding ſtory is a fable invented ſince the days of Homer. This may perhaps be true, and we may naturally conclude it to be true from his ſilence of it, but not from the epithet ἀμύμων; for in the firſt book of the Odyſſey, Jupiter gives the ſame appellation to Ægyſthus, even while he condemns him of murder and adultery. Euſtathius adds, that Salmoneus was a great proficient in mechanics, and inventor of a veſſel called βρονθεῖον, which imitated thunder by rolling ſtones in it, which gave occaſion to the fictions of the poets.

Ver. 283. *For fair Enipeus, as from fruitful urns*
He pours his wat'ry ſtore, the virgin burns.]

There are no fables in the poets that ſeem more bold than theſe

Smooth flows the gentle ſtream with wanton pride,
And in ſoft mazes rolls a ſilver tide.
As on his banks the maid enamour'd roves,
The monarch of the deep beholds and loves;
In her Enipeus' form and borrow'd charms,
The am'rous god deſcends into her arms:
Around, a ſpacious arch of waves he throws,
And high in air the liquid mountain roſe;
Thus in ſurrounding floods conceal'd he proves
The pleaſing tranſport, and compleats his loves.
Then ſoftly ſighing, he the fair addreſt,
And as he ſpoke her tender hand he preſt.
Hail happy nymph! no vulgar births are ow'd
To the prolific raptures of a god:
Lo! when nine times the moon renews her horn,
Two brother heroes ſhall from thee be born;

concerning the commerce between women and river-gods; but Euſtathius gives us a probable ſolution: I will tranſlate him literally. It was cuſtomary for young virgins to reſort frequently to rivers to bathe in them; and the ancients have very well explained theſe fables about the intercourſe between them and the water-gods: "Receive my virginity, O Scamander!" ſays a lady; but it is very apparent who this Scamander was: her lover Cimon lay concealed in the reeds. This was a good excuſe for female frailty, in ages of credulity: for ſuch imaginary intercourſe between the fair ſex and deities was not only believed, but eſteemed honourable. No doubt the ladies were frequently deceived; their lovers perſonated the deities, and they took a Cimon to their arms in the diſguiſe of a Scamander.

It is uncertain where this Enipeus flows: Strabo (ſays Euſtathius), imagines it to be a river of Peloponneſus, that diſembogues its waters into the Alphæus; for the Theſſalian river is Eniſeus, and not Enipeus: this riſes from mount Othrys, and receives into it the Epidanus. The former ſeems to be the river intended by Homer, for it takes its ſource from a village called Salmone; and what ſtrengthens this conjecture is the neighbourhood of the ocean (or Neptune in this fable), to that river. Lucian has made this ſtory of Enipeus the ſubject of one of his dialogues.

Thy

Thy early care the future worthies claim,
To point them to the arduous paths of fame;
But in thy breaſt th' important truth conceal,
Nor dare the ſecret of a god reveal:
For know, thou Neptune view'ſt! and at my nod
Earth trembles, and the waves confeſs their god.
He added not, but mounting ſpurn'd the plain,
Then plunge'd into the chambers of the main.
Now in the time's full proceſs forth ſhe brings
Jove's dread vicegerents, in two future kings;
O'er proud Iolcos Pelias ſtretch'd his reign,
And god-like Neleus rul'd the Pylian plain:
Then fruitful, to her Cretheus' royal bed
She gallant Pheres and fam'd Æſon bred:
From the ſame fountain Amythaon roſe,
Pleas'd with the din of war, and noble ſhout of foes.
There mov'd Antiope with haughty charms,
Who bleſt th' almighty Thund'rer in her arms:
Hence ſprung Amphion, hence brave Zethus came,
Founders of Thebes, and men of mighty name;

Ver. 319. *Hence ſprung Amphion*——] The fable of Thebes built by the power of muſic is not mentioned by Homer, and therefore may be ſuppoſed to be of later invention. Homer relates many circumſtances in theſe ſhort hiſtories differently from his ſucceſſors; Epicaſte is called Jocaſta, and the tragedians have entirely varied from the ſtory of Oedipus: they tell us he tore out his eyes; that he was driven from Thebes; and, being conducted by his daughter Antigone, arrived at Athens, where, entering the temple of the furies, he died in the midſt of a furious ſtorm, and was carried by it into hell: whereas Homer directly affirms, that he continued to reign in Thebes after all his calamities.

It is not eaſy to give a reaſon why the mother, and not the father, is ſaid to ſend the furies to torment Oedipus, eſpecially becauſe he was the murderer of his father Laius: Euſtathius anſwers, that it was by accident that he ſlew Laius; but upon the diſcovery of his wickedneſs in marrying his mother Jocaſta, he uſed her with more barbarity and rigour than was neceſſary, and therefore ſhe purſues him with her vengeance. Jocaſta and Dido both die after the ſame manner by their own hands.

Tho' bold in open field, they yet ſurround
The town with walls, and mound inject on mound;
Here ramparts ſtood, there tow'rs roſe high in air,
And there thro' ſev'n wide portals ruſh'd the war.
There with ſoft ſtep the fair Alcmena trod,
Who bore Alcides to the thund'ring god;
And Megara, who charm'd the ſon of Jove,
And ſoften'd his ſtern ſoul to tender love.
Sullen and ſour with diſcontented mein.
Jocaſta frown'd, th' inceſtuous Theban queen;
With her own ſon ſhe join'd in nuptial bands,
Tho' father's blood imbru'd his murd'rous hands:
The gods and men the dire offence deteſt,
The gods with all their furies rend his breaſt:
In lofty Thebes he wore th' imperial crown,
A pompous wretch! accurs'd upon a throne.
The wife ſelf-murder'd from a beam depends,
And her foul ſoul to blackeſt hell deſcends;
Thence to her ſon the choiceſt pleagues ſhe brings,
And the fiends haunt him with a thouſand ſtings.
And now the beauteous Chloris I deſcry,
A lovely ſhade, Amphion's youngeſt joy!
With gifts unnumber'd Neleus ſought her arms,
Nor paid too dearly for unequall'd charms;
Great in Orchomenos, in Pylos great,
He ſway'd the ſcepter with imperial ſtate.
Three gallant ſons the joyful monarch told,
Sage Neſtor, Periclimenus the bold,

And

Ver. 345. *Great in Orchomenus*——] This is a very conſiderable city lying between Bœotia and Phocis, upon the river Cephiſus: Homer calls it the Minyan Orchomenos, becauſe the Minyans an ancient people inhabited it: it was the colony of theſe Minyans that ſailed to Iolcos, and gave name to the Argonauts. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 348. ——*Periclimenus the bold.*] The reaſon why Homer gives this epithet to Periclimenus, may be learned from Heſiod: Neptune gave him the power to change himſelf into all ſhapes, but he

And Chromius laſt; but of the ſofter race,
One nymph alone, a miracle of grace.
Kings on their thrones for lovely Pero burn,
The ſire denies, and kings rejected mourn.
To him alone the beauteous prize he yields,
Whoſe arm ſhould raviſh from Phylacian fields
The herds of Iphyclus, detain'd in wrong;
Wild, furious herds, unconquerably ſtrong!
This dares a ſeer, but nought the ſeer prevails,
In beauty's cauſe illuſtriouſly he fails;

Twelve

he was ſlain by Hercules: Periclimenus aſſaulted that hero in the ſhape of a bee, or fly, who diſcovering him in that diſguiſe, by the means of Pallas ſlew him with his club.

Ver. 357. *This dares a ſeer*, &c.] This ſtory is related with great obſcurity, but we learn from the xvth book that the name of this prophet was Melampus. Iphyclus was the ſon of Deioneus, and uncle to Tyro; he had ſeized upon the goods of Tyro the mother of Neleus, among which were many beautiful oxen: theſe Neleus demands, but is unjuſtly denied by Iphyclus: Neleus had a daughter named Pero, a great beauty, who was courted by all the neighbouring princes, but the father refuſes her unleſs to the man who recovers theſe oxen from Iphyclus: Bias was in love with Pero, and perſuades his brother Melampus a prophet to undertake the recovery; he attempts it, but, being vanquiſhed, is thrown into priſon; but at laſt ſet at liberty, for telling Iphyclus, who was childleſs, how to procure iſſue. Iphyclus upon this gave him the oxen for a reward.

Nothing can be more ridiculous than the explanation of this ſtory in Euſtathius, which I will lay before the reader for his enterment. Melampus, after he was made a priſoner, was truſted to the care of a man and a woman; the man uſed him with mercy, and the woman with cruelty: one day he heard a low noiſe, and a family of worms in conference. (He underſtood the language of all the animal creation, beaſts and reptiles). Theſe worms were diſcourſing how they had eaten through a great beam that lay over the head of Melampus: he immediately provides for his own ſafety, feigns a ſickneſs, and begs to be carried into the freſh air: the woman and the man immediately comply with this requeſt; at which inſtant the beam falling, kills the woman: an account of

Twelve moons the foe the captive youth detains
In painful dungeons, and coercive chains;
The foe at laſt, from durance where he lay,
His art revering, gave him back to day;
Won by prophetic knowledge, to fulfill
The ſteadfaſt purpoſe of th' almighty will.
With graceful port advancing now I ſpy'd
Leda the fair, the god like Tyndar's bride:
Hence Pollux ſprung who wields with furious ſway
The deathful gauntlet, matchleſs in the fray:
And Caſtor glorious on th' embattled plain
Curb's the proud ſteed, reluctant to the rein:
By turns they viſit this ætherial ſky,
And live alternate, and alternate die;

In

this is forthwith carried to Iphyclus, who, ſending for Melampus, aſks who he is? He tells him, a prophet; and that he came for the oxen of Neleus: Iphyclus commands him to declare how he may have an heir? Melampus kills an ox, and calls all the birds of the air to feaſt on it; they all appear except the vulture; he propoſes the eaſe to them, but they give no ſatisfactory anſwer; at laſt the vulture appears, and gives Melampus a full information: upon this Iphyclus obtains a child, and Melampus the oxen of Neleus.

Ver. 364. *The ſtedfaſt purpoſe of th' almighty will.*] Theſe words διὸς ἐτελείετο βουλὴ, ſeem to come in without any connection with the ſtory, and conſequently unneceſſarily; but Homer ſpeaks of it conciſely, as an adventure well known in his times, and therefore not wanting a further explication: but Apollodorus relates the whole at large, lib. i. The reaſon why theſe words are inſerted is, to inform us that there were ancient prophecies concerning Iphyclus; that it was decreed by Jupiter he ſhould have no children, till he had recourſe to a prophet, who, explaining theſe prophecies to him, ſhould ſhew him how to obtain that bleſſing: in this ſenſe the will of Jupiter may be ſaid to be fulfilled.

Ver. 372. *And live alternate, and alternate die.*] Caſtor and Pollux are called Διόσκουροι, or the "ſons of Jupiter;" but what could give occaſion to this fiction, of their living and dying alternately? Euſtathius informs us that it is a phyſical allegory: they repreſent the two hemiſpheres of the world; the one of which is

continually

In hell beneath, on earth, in heav'n above
Reign the twin-gods, the fav'rite ſons of Jove.
There Ephimedia trod the gloomy plain,
Who charm'd the monarch of the boundleſs main;
Hence Ephialtes, hence ſtern Otus ſprung,
More fierce than giants, more than giants ſtrong;
The earth o'erburthen'd groan'd beneath their weight,
None but Orion e'er ſurpaſs'd their height:
The wond'rous youths had ſcarce nine winters told,
When high in air, tremendous to behold,
Nine ells aloft they rear'd their tow'ring head,
And full nine cubits broad their ſhoulders ſpread.
Proud

continually enlightened by the ſun, and conſequently the other is then in darkneſs: and theſe being ſucceſſively illuminated according to the order of the day and night, one of theſe ſons of Jupiter may be ſaid to revive when one part of the world riſes into day, and the other to die, when it deſcends into darkneſs. What makes this allegory the more probable is, that Jupiter denotes, in many allegories of Homer, the air, or the upper regions of it.

Ver. 383. *Nine ells aloft they rear'd their tow'ring head.*] This is undoubtedly a very bold fiction, and has been cenſured by ſome critics as monſtrous, and praiſed by others as ſublime. It may ſeem utterly incredible that any human creatures could be nine ells, that is, eleven yards and a quarter in height, at the age of nine years. But it may vindicate Homer as a poet to ſay, that he only made uſe of a fable, that had been tranſmitted down from the earlieſt times of the world; for ſo early the war between the gods and giants was ſuppoſed to be. There might a rational account be given of theſe apparent incredibilities; if I might be allowed to ſay what many authors of great name have conjectured, that theſe ſtories are only traditional, and all founded upon the ejection of the fallen angels from heaven, and the wars they had with the good angels to regain their ſtations. If this might be allowed, we ſhall then have real giants, who endeavoured to take heaven by aſſault; then nothing can be invented by a poet ſo boldly, as to exceed what may juſtly be believed of theſe beings: then the ſtories of heaping mountain upon mountain will come within the bounds of credibility. But, without having recourſe to this ſolution, Longinus brings

Proud of their ſtrength and more than mortal ſize,
The gods they challenge, and affect the ſkies;
Heav'd on Olympus tott'ring Oſſa ſtood;
On Oſſa, Pelion nods with all his wood:
Such were thy youths! had they to manhood grown,
Almighty Jove had trembled on his throne.
But ere the harveſt of the beard began
To briſtle on the chin, and promiſe man,
His ſhafts Apollo aim'd; at once they ſound,
And ſtretch the giant-monſters o'er the ground.
There mournful Phædra with ſad Procris moves,
Both beauteous ſhades, both hapleſs in their loves;
And near them walk'd, with ſolemn pace and ſlow,
Sad Ariadne, partner of their woe;
The royal Minos Ariadne bred,
She Theſeus lov'd; from Crete with Theſeus fled;
Swift to the Dian iſle the hero flies,
And tow'rds his Athens bears the lovely prize;
There,

brings this paſſage as an inſtance of true ſublimity, chap. vi. He is proving, that the ſublime is ſometimes found without the pathetic, for ſome paſſions are mean, as fear, ſadneſs, ſorrow, and conſequently incapable of ſublimity; and on the other hand, there are many things great and ſublime, in which there is no paſſion; of this kind is what Homer ſays concerning Otus and Ephialtes, with ſo much boldneſs.

Ver. 387. *——On Olympus tott'ring Oſſa ſtood.* &c.] Strabo takes notice of the judgement of Homer, in placing the mountains in this order; they all ſtand in Macedonia; Olympus is the largeſt, and therefore he makes it the baſis upon which Oſſa ſtands, that being the next to Olympus in magnitude, and Pelion being the leaſt is placed above Oſſa, and thus they riſe pyramidically.

Ver. 402. *And tow'rds his Athens bears the lovely prize.*] Homer juſtifies Theſeus from any crime with relation to Ariadne, he is guilty of no infidelity as ſucceeding poets affirm; ſhe died ſuddenly in Dia or Naxos, (an iſland lying between Thera and Crete); Diana ſlew her at the inſtigation of Bacchus, who accuſed her to that goddeſs, for profaning her temple by too free an intercourſe with Theſeus;

There Bacchus with fierce rage Diana fires,
The goddeſs aims her ſhaft, the nymph expires.
There Clymenè and Mera I behold,
There Eriphylè weeps, who looſely ſold
Her lord, her honour, for the luſt of gold.
But ſhould I all recount, the night would fail,
Unequal to the melancholy tale:
And all-compoſing reſt my nature craves,
Here in the court, or yonder on the waves;
In you I truſt, and in the heav'nly pow'rs,
To land Ulyſſes on his natives ſhores.
He ceas'd: but left ſo charming on their ear
His voice, that liſt'ning ſtill they ſeem'd to hear.
'Till

Theſeus; this Homer calls μαρτυρὶν Διονύσου. Clemené was a daughter of Mynias, Mæra or Proetus and Antæa, who, having made a vow to Diana of perpetual virginity, broke it; and therefore fell by that goddeſs; Phædra was wife to Theſeus, and fell in love with her ſon Hippolytus Eriphyle was the daughter of Talaüs and Lyſimache, wife of the propnet Amphiaraus; who, being bribed with a collar of gold by Polynices, obliged her huſband to go to the war of Thebes, though ſhe knew he was decreed to fall before that city: ſhe was ſlain by her ſon Alcmæon. *Euſtathius.*

Ulyſſes, when he concludes, ſays it is time to repoſe,

Here in the court, or yonder on the waves.

To underſtand this, the reader muſt remember, that in the beginning of the eighth book all things were prepared for his immediate voyage, or as it is there expreſſed,

——Ev'n now the gales
Call thee aboard, and ſtretch the ſwelling ſails.

So that he deſires to repoſe in the ſhip, that he may begin his voyage early in the morning.

Ver. 414. *He ceas'd: but left ſo charming on their ear*
His voice——]

I cannot tell whether this pauſe, or break in the narration of Ulyſſes, has a good effect or not; whether it gives a relief to the reader,

'Till riſing up, Aretè ſilence broke,
Stretch'd out her ſnowy hand, and thus ſhe ſpoke:
What wond'rous man heav'n ſends us in our gueſt!
Thro' all his woes the hero ſhines confeſt;
His comely port, his ample frame expreſs
A manly air, majeſtic in diſtreſs.
He, as my gueſt, is my peculiar care,
You ſhare the pleaſure,—then in bounty ſhare;
To worth in miſery a rev'rence pay,
And with a gen'rous hand reward his ſtay;
For ſince kind heav'n with wealth our realm has bleſt,
Give it to heav'n, by aiding the diſtreſt.
Then ſage Echeneus, whoſe grave, rev'rend brow
The hand of time had ſilver'd o'er with ſnow,
Mature in wiſdom roſe: Your words, he cries,
Demand obedience, for your words are wiſe.
But let our king direct the glorious way
To gen'rous acts; our part is to obey.

reader, or is an unexpected diſappointment of the purſuit of the ſtory? But certainly what is inſerted during this ſhort interruption, is particularly well choſen; it unites the epiſode with the main action, and ſhews how it contributes to the end of the Odyſſey, in influencing the Phæacians not only to reſtore Ulyſſes, but reſtore him with wealth and honour, which is the aim of the whole poem.

Ver. 425. ——*With a gen'rous hand reward his ſtay*] This I am perſuaded is the true meaning of the paſſage; Ulyſſes had ſhewed a deſire immediately to go aboard, and the queen draws an argument from this to induce the Phæacians to a greater contribution, and Ulyſſes to a longer ſtay; ſhe perſuades them to take time to prepare their preſents, which muſt occaſion the ſtay of Ulyſſes till they are prepared. They might otherwiſe (obſerves Dacier), have pretended to comply with the impatience of Ulyſſes, and immediately diſmiſſed him with a ſmall gratuity, under the pretext of not having time to prepare a greater. It muſt be confeſſed, to the reproach of human nature, that this is but too juſt a picture of it: ſelf-intereſt makes the great very ready to gratify their petitioners with a diſmiſſion, or to comply with them to their diſadvantage.

While

While life informs theſe limbs (the king reply'd)
Well to deſerve be all my cares employ'd:
But here this night the royal gueſt detain,
'Till the ſun flames along th' ætherial plain:
Be it my taſk to ſend with ample ſtores
The ſtranger from our hoſpitable ſhores:
Tread you my ſteps! 'Tis mine to lead the race,
The firſt in glory, as the firſt in place.
To whom the prince: This night with joy I ſtay,
O monarch great in virtue as in ſway!
If thou the circling year my ſtay controul,
To raiſe a bounty noble as thy ſoul;
The circling year I wait, with ampler ſtores
And fitter pomp to hail my native ſhores:
Then by my realms due homage would be paid;
For wealthy kings are loyally obey'd!
O king! for ſuch thou art, and ſure thy blood
Thro' veins (he cry'd) of royal fathers flow'd;
Unlike thoſe vagrants who on falſehood live,
Skill'd in ſmooth tales, and artful to deceive;
Thy better ſoul abhors the liar's part,
Wiſe is thy voice, and noble is thy heart.
Thy words like muſic ev'ry breaſt controul,
Steal thro' the ear, and win upon the ſoul;
Soft, as ſome ſong divine, thy ſtory flows,
No better could the muſe record thy woes.
But ſay, upon the dark and diſmal coaſt,
Saw'ſt thou the worthies of the Grecian hoſt?
The god-like leaders who in battle ſlain,
Fell before Troy, and nobly preſt the plain?
And lo! a length of night behind remains,
The ev'ning ſtars ſtill mount th' ætherial plains.
Thy tale with raptures I could hear thee tell,
Thy woes on earth, the wond'rous ſcenes in hell,
'Till in the vault of heav'n the ſtars decay,
And the ſky reddens with the riſing day.

O worthy of the pow'r the gods aſſign'd,
(Ulyſſes thus replies) a king in mind!
Since yet the early hour of night allows
Time for diſcourſe, and time for ſoft repoſe,
If ſcenes of miſery can entertain,
Woes I unfold, of woes a diſmal train.
Prepare to hear of murder and of blood;
Of god-like heroes who uninjur'd ſtood
Amidſt a war of ſpears in foreign lands,
Yet bled at home, and bled by female hands.
Now ſummon'd Proſerpine to hell's black hall
The heroine ſhades; they vaniſh'd at her call;
When lo! advance'd the forms of heroes ſlain
By ſtern Ægyſthus, a majeſtic train,
And high above the reſt, Atrides preſt the plain.
He quaff'd the gore: and ſtraight his ſoldier knew,
And from his eyes pour'd down the tender dew;
His arms he ſtretch'd; his arms the touch deceive,
Nor in the fond embrace, embraces give:
His ſubſtance vaniſh'd, and his ſtrength decay'd,
Now all Atrides is an empty ſhade.
Mov'd at the ſight, I for a ſpace reſign'd
To ſoft affliction all manly mind;
At laſt with tears—O what relentleſs doom,
Imperial phantom, bow'd thee to the tomb?
Say while the ſea, and while the tempeſt raves,
Has fate oppreſs'd thee in the roaring waves,
Or nobly ſeiz'd thee in the dire alarms
Of war and ſlaughter, and the claſh of arms?
The ghoſt returns: O chief of human kind
For active courage and a patient mind;
Nor while the ſea, nor while the tempeſt raves,
Has fate oppreſs'd me on the roaring waves!
Nor nobly ſeiz'd me in the dire alarms,
Of war and ſlaughter, and the claſh of arms.

Stab'd

Stab'd by a murd'rous hand Atrides dy'd,
A foul adult'rer, and a faithleſs bride;
Ev'n in my mirth and at the friendly feaſt,
O'er the full bowl, the traitor ſtab'd his gueſt;
Thus by the gory arm of ſlaughter falls
The ſtately ox, and bleeds within the ſtalls.
But not with me the direful murder ends,
Theſe, theſe expir'd! their crime, they were my friends:
Thick as the boars, which ſome luxurious lord
Kills for the feaſt, to crown the nuptial board.
When war has thunder'd with its loudeſt ſtorms,
Death thou haſt ſeen in all her ghaſtly forms;
In duel met her, on the liſted ground,
When hand to hand they wound return for wound;
But never have thy eyes aſtoniſh'd view'd
So vile a deed, ſo dire a ſcence of blood.
Ev'n in the flow of joy, when now the bowl
Glows in our veins, and opens ev'ry ſoul,
We groan, we faint; with blood the dome is dy'd,
And o'er the pavement floats the dreadful tide——
Her breaſt all gore, with lamentable cries,
The bleeding innocent Caſſandra dies!
Then tho' pale death froze cold in ev'ry vein,
My ſword I ſtrive to wield, but ſtrive in vain;
Nor did my trait'reſs wife theſe eye-lids cloſe,
Or decently in death my limbs compoſe.
O woman, woman, when to ill thy mind
Is bent, all hell contains no fouler fiend:
And ſuch was mine! who baſely plunge'd her ſword
Thro' the fond boſom where ſhe reign'd ador'd!
Alas! I hop'd, the toils of war o'ercome,
To meet ſoft quiet and repoſe at home;
Deluſive hope! O wife, thy deeds diſgrace
The perjur'd ſex, and blacken all the race;
And ſhould poſterity one virtuous find,
Name Clytemneſtra, they will curſe the kind.

O injur'd ſhade, I cry'd, what mighty woes
To thy imperial race from woman roſe!
By woman here thou tread'ſt this mournful ſtrand,
And Greece by woman lies a deſert land.
Warn'd by my ills beware, the ſhade replies,
Nor truſt the ſex that is ſo rarely wiſe;
When earneſt to explore thy ſecret breaſt,
Unfold ſome trifle, but conceal the reſt.
But in thy conſort ceaſe to fear a foe,
For thee ſhe feels ſincerity of woe:
When Troy firſt bled beneath the Grecian arms
She ſhone unrivall'd with a blaze of charms,
Thy infant ſon her fragrant boſom preſt,
Hung at her knee, or wanton'd at her breaſt;
But now the years a num'rous train have ran;
The blooming boy is ripen'd into man;
Thy eyes ſhall ſee him burn with noble fire,
The ſire ſhall bleſs his ſon, the ſon his ſire:
But my Oreſtes never met theſe eyes,
Without one look the murder'd father dies;
Then from a wretched friend this wiſdom learn,
Ev'n to thy queen diſguis'd unknown, return;
For ſince of womankind ſo few are juſt,
Think all are falſe, nor ev'n the faithful truſt.
But ſay, reſides my ſon in royal port,
In rich Orchomenos, or Sparta's court?

Or

Ver. 541. ——————*What mighty woes*
To thy imperial race from woman roſe!]
Ulyſſes here means Aërope the wife of Atreus, and mother of Agamemnon, who, being corrupted by Thyeſtes, involved the whole family in the utmoſt calamities. *Euſtathius.*

Ver. 565. *But ſay, reſides my ſon*——————] Euſtathius gives us the reaſon why Agamemnon mentions Pyle, Sparta, and Orchomenos, as places where Oreſtes might make his reſidence: Sparta was under the dominion of his brother Menelaus; Pyle of his old friend and faithful counſellor Neſtor; and Orchomenos was a city

Or ſay in Pyle? for yet he views the light,
Nor glides a phantom thro' the realms of night.
Then I: Thy ſuit is vain, nor can I ſay
If yet he breathes in realms of chearful day;
Or pale or wan beholds theſe nether ſkies?
Truth I revere: for wiſdom never lies.
Thus in a tide of tears our ſorrows flow,
And add new horrour to the realms of woe;
'Till ſide by ſide along the dreary coaſt
Advance'd Achilles' and Patroclus' ghoſt,
A friendly pair! near theſe the * Pylian ſtray'd,
And tow'ring Ajax, an illuſtrious ſhade!
War was his joy, and pleas'd with loud alarms,
None but Pelides brighter ſhone in arms.
Thro' the thick gloom his friend Achilles knew,
And as he ſpeaks the tears deſcend in dew.
Com'ſt thou alive to view the Stygian bounds,
Where the wan ſpectres walk eternal rounds;

city of great ſtrength, and therefore of great ſecurity. We may evidently gather from this paſſage what notion the antients had concerning a future ſtate: namely, that perſons after death were intirely ſtrangers to the affairs of this world; for Oreſtes his ſon had ſlain his murderer Ægyſthus, and reigned in peaceable poſſeſſion of his dominions, when Agamemnon is ignorant of the whole tranſaction, and deſires Ulyſſes to give him information.

Ver. 576. ——*Achilles' and Patroclus' ghoſt.*] Homer lets no opportunity paſs of celebrating his hero Achilles, he cannot fail of awakening our attention to hear the ſtory of this great man after death, of whom alive we ſaw ſuch wonders. Beſides, the poet pays an honour to true friendſhip: the perſon whom Achilles beſt loved on earth, is his chief companion in the other world: a very ſtrong argument to cultivate friendſhip with ſincerity. Achilles here literally fulfills what he promiſed in the Iliad.

If in the melancholy ſhades below
The flames of friends, and lovers ceaſe to glow,
Yet mine ſhall ſacred laſt; mine undecay'd
Burn on thro' death, and animate my ſhade.

* Antilochus.

Nor fear'ſt the dark and diſmal waſte to tread,
Throng'd with pale ghoſts, familiar with the dead?
To whom with ſighs: I paſs theſe dreadful gates
To ſeek the Thebans, and conſult the fates:
For ſtill diſtreſt I rove from coaſt to coaſt,
Loſt to my friends, and to my country loſt.
But ſure the eye of time beholds no name
So bleſt as thine in all the rolls of fame;
Alive we hail'd thee with our guardian gods,
And dead, thou rul'ſt a king in theſe abodes.
Talk not of ruling in this dol'rous gloom,
Nor think vain words (he cry'd) can eaſe my doom.
Rather I chuſe laborioufly to bear
A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,
A ſlave to ſome poor hind that toils for bread;
Than reign the ſcepter'd monarch of the dead.
But ſay, if in my ſteps my ſon proceeds,
And emulates his god-like father's deeds?
If at the claſh of arms, and ſhout of foes,
Swells his bold heart, his boſom nobly glows?
Say if my ſire, the rev'rend Peleus reigns
Great in his Pthia, and his throne maintains;
Or weak and old, my youthful arm demands,
To fix the ſcepter ſteadfaſt in his hands?
O might the lamp of life rekindled burn,
And death releaſe me from the ſilent urn!
This arm that thunder'd o'er the Phrygian plain,
And ſwell'd the ground with mountains of the ſlain,
Should vindicate my injur'd father's fame,
Cruſh the proud rebel, and aſſert his claim.
Illuſtrious ſhade, (I cry'd) of Peleus' fates
No circumſtance the voice of fame relates:
But hear with pleas'd attention the renown,
The wars and wiſdom of thy gallant ſon:
With me from Scyros to the field of fame
Radiant in arms the blooming hero came.

When

When Greece aſſembled all her hundred ſtates
To ripen counſels and decide debates;
Heav'ns! how he charm'd us with a flow of ſenſe,
And won the heart with manly eloquence!
He firſt was ſeen of all the peers to riſe,
The third in wiſdom where they all were wiſe;
But when to try the fortune of the day,
Hoſt mov'd tow'rd hoſt in terrible array,
Before the van, impatient for the fight,
With martial port he ſtrode, and ſtern delight;
Heaps ſtrew'd on heaps beneath his falchion groan'd,
And monuments of dead deform'd the ground.
The time would fail ſhould I in order tell
What foes were vanquiſh'd, and what numbers fell:
How, loſt thro' love, Eurypylus was ſlain,
And round him bled his bold Cetæan train.

To

Ver. 626. *The third in wiſdom*———] I have not ventured to render the Greek literally; Ulyſſes ſays that Neoptolemus was ſo wiſe, that only he himſelf and Neſtor were wiſer; a truth that would appear more graceful, if ſpoken by any other perſon than Ulyſſes. But perhaps the poet puts theſe words into his mouth, only becauſe he is ſpeaking to the Phæacians, who loved themſelves to boaſt, and were full of vain glory; and conſequently they could not think ſelf praiſe a crime in Ulyſſes; on the contrary, it could not fail of having a very good effect, as it ſets him off as a perſon of conſummate wiſdom.

The poet excellently ſuſtains the character of Achilles in this interview: in the Iliad he is deſcribed a dutiful ſon, and always expreſſing a tender affection for his father Peleus; in the Odyſſey he is drawn in the ſame ſoft colours: in the Iliad he is repreſented as a man of ſtrong reſentment; in the Odyſſey, he firſt imagines that his father ſuffers, and upon this imagination he immediately takes fire, and flies into threats and fury.

Dictys, lib. vi. relates, that Peleus was expulſed from his kingdom by Acaſtus, but that Pyrrhus the ſon of Achilles afterwards revenged the injury.

Ver. 635. *How, loſt thro' love, Eurypylus was ſlain.*] It muſt be

To Troy no hero came of nobler line,
Or if of nobler, Memnon, it was thine.
When Ilion in the horſe receiv'd her doom,
And unſeen armies ambuſh'd in its womb;
Greece gave her latent warriours to my care,
'Twas mine on Troy to pour th' impriſon'd war:
Then when the boldeſt boſom beat with fear,
When the ſtern eyes of heroes dropp'd a tear;
Fierce in his look his ardent valour glow'd,
Fluſh'd in his cheek, or ſally'd in his blood;
Indignant in the dark receſs he ſtands,
Pants for the battle, and the war demands;
His voice breath'd death, and with a martial air
He graſp'd his ſword, and ſhook his glitt'ring ſpear.
And when the gods our arms with conqueſt crown'd,
When Troy's proud bulwarks ſmok'd upon the ground
Greece to reward her ſoldier's gallant toils,
Heap'd high his navy with unnumber'd ſpoils.
Thus great in glory from the din of war
Safe he return'd, without one hoſtile ſcar;
Tho' ſpears in iron tempeſts rain'd around,
Yet innocent they play'd, and guiltleſs of a wound.
While yet I ſpoke, the ſhade with tranſport glow'd,
Roſe in his majeſty, and nobler trod;
With haughty ſtalk he ſought the diſtant glades
Of warriour kings, and join'd th' illuſtrious ſhades.
Now without number ghoſt by ghoſt aroſe,
All wailing with unutterable woes.

owned that this paſſage is very intricate: Strabo himſelf complains of its obſcurity; the poet (ſays that author), rather propoſes an ænigma, than a clear hiſtory: for who are theſe Cetæans, and what are theſe "preſents of women?" and adds, that the grammarians darken, inſtead of clearing the obſcurity. But it is no difficulty to ſolve theſe objections from Euſtathius.

It is evident from Strabo himſelf, that Eurypylus reigned near the river Caïcus, over the Myſians, and Pliny confines it to Teuthrany.

Alone,

Alone, apart, in diſcontented mood
A gloomy ſhade, the ſullen Ajax ſtood;
For ever ſad with proud diſdain he pin'd,
And the loſt arms for ever ſtung his mind;
Tho' to the conteſt Thetis gave the laws,
And Pallas, by the Trojans, judge'd the cauſe.
O why was I victorious in the ſtrife;
O dear-bought honour with ſo brave a life!
With him the ſtrength of war, the ſoldiers pride,
Our ſecond hope to great Achilles dy'd!
Touch'd at the ſight from tears I ſcarce refrain,
And tender ſorrow thrills in ev'ry vein;
Penſive and ſad I ſtand, at length accoſt,
With accent mild th' inexorable ghoſt.

Still burns thy rage? and can brave ſouls reſent
Ev'n after death? Relent, great ſhade, relent!
Periſh thoſe arms which by the gods decree
Accurs'd our army with the loſs of thee!
With thee we fell; Greece wept thy hapleſs fates;
And ſhook aſtoniſh'd thro' her hundred ſtates;
Not more, when great Achilles preſt the ground,
And breath'd his manly ſpirit thro' the wound.
O deem thy fall not ow'd to man's decree,
Jove hated Greece, and puniſh'd Greece in thee!
Turn then, oh peaceful turn, thy wrath controul,
And calm the raging tempeſt of thy ſoul.

While yet I ſpeak, the ſhade diſdains to ſtay,
In ſilence turns, and ſullen ſtalks away.

Touch'd

Ver. 691. ——*The ſhade diſdains to ſtay,*
In ſilence turns, and ſullen ſtalks away.]

This ſilence of Ajax was very much admired by the antients, and Longinus propoſes it as an inſtance of the true ſublimity of thought, which ſprings from an elevation of ſoul, and not from the diction; for a man may be truly ſublime without ſpeaking a word: thus in the ſilence of Ajax there is ſomething more noble, than in any thing he could poſſibly have ſpoken. Monſieur Rapin agrees with Longinus: the ſtubborn untractable Ajax (ſays that author), could

not

Touch'd at his ſour retreat, thro' deepeſt night,
Thro' hell's black bounds I had purſu'd his flight,
And force'd the ſtubborn ſpectre to reply;
But wond'rous viſions drew my curious eye.
High on a throne tremendous to behold,
Stern Minos waves a mace of burniſh'd gold;
Around ten thouſand thouſand ſpectres ſtand
Thro' the wide dome of Dis, a trembling band.
Still as they plead, the fatal lots he rolls,
Abſolves the juſt, and dooms the guilty ſouls.
There huge Orion of portentous ſize,
Swift thro' the gloom a giant hunter flies;
A pond'rous mace of braſs with direful ſway
Aloft he whirls, to cruſh the ſavage prey;
Stern beaſts in trains that by his truncheon fell,
Now griſly forms, ſhoot o'er the lawns of hell.
There Tityus large and long, in fetters bound,
O'erſpreads nine acres of infernal ground;

Two

not have made a better return to the compliments full of ſubmiſſion which were paid him by Ulyſſes, than by a diſdainful and contemptuous ſilence: Ajax has more the air of grandeur and majeſty, when he ſays nothing, than when the poet makes him ſpeak. Virgil was ſenſible of the beauty of it, and paints Dido in the attitude of Ajax. Fraguier infinitely prefers the ſilence of Dido to that of Ajax; ſhe was a woman diſappointed in love, and therefore no wonder if ſhe was greatly paſſionate, and ſunk under the weight of the calamity; but Ajax was a hero, and ought to have freed himſelf by his courage from ſuch an unworthy degree of reſentment. But to me there appears no weight in this objection: we muſt remember what an hero Ajax is, a ſour, ſtubborn, untractable hero; and upon all occaſions given to taciturnity; this is his univerſal and notorious character through the whole Iliad: the poet therefore adapts his deſcription to it, and he is the ſame Ajax in the Odyſſey as he was in the Iliad. Had this been ſpoken of any other hero, the criticiſm had been more juſt, but in Ajax this ſtubborn ſilence is proper and noble.

Ver. 709. *There Tityus*——] It is needleſs to mention that Virgil has adorned his deſcent into hell with moſt of theſe fables borrowed

Two rav'nous vultures, furious for their food,
Scream o'er the fiend, and riot in his blood,
Inceſſant gore the liver in his breaſt,
Th' immortal liver grows, and gives th' immortal feaſt.
For as o'er Panopé's enamell'd plains
Latona journey'd to the Pythian fanes,
With haughty love th' audacious monſter ſtrove
To force the goddeſs, and to rival Jove.
There Tantalus along the Stygian bounds
Pours out deep groans; (with groans all hell reſounds)
Ev'n in the circling floods refreſhment craves,
And pines with thirſt amidſt a ſea of waves:
When to the water he his lip applies,
Back from his lip the treach'rous water flies.

rowed from Homer; it is equally unneceſſary to relate what antiquity ſays of theſe fabled perſons, and their hiſtories; but the moral of them all is obſerved by Euſtathius, and fully explained by Lucretius, which I will lay together from Mr. Dryden's tranſlation.

——The diſmal tales that poets tell
Are verify'd on earth, and not in hell;
No Tantalus looks with a fearful eye,
Or dreads th' impending rock to cruſh him from on high;
No Tityus, torn by vultures, lies in hell,
Nor could the lobes of his rank liver ſwell
To that prodigious maſs, for their eternal meal.
But he's the Tityus, who, by love oppreſs'd,
Or tyrant-paſſion preying on his breaſt,
And ever anxious thoughts, is robb'd of reſt.
The Siſyphus is he, whom noiſe and ſtrife
Seduce from all the ſoft retreats of life,
To vex the government, diſturb the laws:
Drunk with the fumes of popular applauſe,
He courts the giddy croud to make him great,
And ſweats and toils in vain, to mount the ſov'reign ſeat.
For ſtill to aim at pow'r, and ſtill to fail,
Ever to ſtrive, and never to prevail,
What is it but in reaſon's true account,
To heave the ſtone againſt the riſing mount?

Above,

Above, beneath, around his hapleſs head,
Trees of all kinds delicious fruitage ſpread;
There figs ſky-dy'd, a purple hue diſcloſe,
Green looks the olive, the pomegranate glows,
There dangling pears exalted ſcents unfold,
And yellow apples ripen into gold;
The fruit he ſtrives to ſeize: but blaſts ariſe,
Toſs it on high, and whirl it to the ſkies.
I turn'd my eye, and as I turn'd ſurvey'd
A mournful viſion! the Siſyphian ſhade;
With many a weary ſtep, and many a groan,
Up a high hill he heaves a huge round ſtone;
The huge round ſtone, reſulting with a bound,
Thunders impetuous down, and ſmokes along the [ground.
Again the reſtleſs orb his toil renews,
Duſt mounts in clouds, and ſweet deſcends in dews.
Now I the ſtrength of Hercules behold,
A tow'ring ſpectre of gigantic mould,
A ſhadowy form! for high in heav'n's abodes
Himſelf reſides, a god among the gods;
There in the bright aſſemblies of the ſkies,
He nectar quaffs, and Hebe crowns his joys,
Here hov'ring ghoſts, like fowl, his ſhade ſurround,
And clang their pinions with terrific ſound;

Ver. 743. ——*Hercules, a ſhadowy form.*] This is the paſſage formerly referred to in theſe annotations, to prove that Hercules was in heaven, while his ſhade was in the infernal regions; a full evidence of the partition of the human compoſition into three parts: the body is buried in the earth; the image or εἴδωλον deſcends into the regions of the departed; and the ſoul, or the divine part of man, is received into heaven: thus the body of Hercules was conſumed in the flames, his image is in hell, and his ſoul in heaven. There is a beautiful moral couched in the fable of his being married to Hebe, or Youth, after death: to imply, that a perpetual youth, or a reputation which never grows old, is the reward of thoſe heroes, who, like Hercules, employ their courage for the good of humankind.

Gloomy

Gloomy as night he ſtands, in act to throw
Th' aerial arrow from the twanging bow.
Around his breaſt a wond'rous zone is roll'd,
Where woodland monſters grin in fretted gold,
There ſullen lions ſternly ſeem to roar,
The bear to growl, to foam the tuſky boar,
There war and havock and deſtruction ſtood,
And vengeful murder red with human blood.
Thus terribly adorn'd the figures ſhine,
Inimitably wrought with ſkill divine.
The mighty ghoſt advance'd with awful look,
And turning his grim viſage, ſternly ſpoke.
O exercis'd in grief! by arts refin'd!
O taught to bear the wrongs of baſe mankind!
Such, ſuch was I! ſtill toſt from care to care,
While in your world I drew the vital air!
Ev'n I who from the lord of thunders roſe,
Bore toils and dangers, and a weight of woes;
To a baſe monarch ſtill a ſlave confin'd,
(The hardeſt bondage to a gen'rous mind!)
Down to theſe worlds I trod the diſmal way,
And dragg'd the three-mouth'd dog to upper day;
Ev'n hell I conquer'd, thro' the friendly aid
Of Maia's offspring and the martial maid.
Thus he, nor deign'd for our reply to ſtay,
But turning ſtalk'd with giant-ſtrides away.

Ver. 769. *Down to theſe worlds I trod the diſmal way.*] Nothing can be more artfully inſerted than the mention of this deſcent of Hercules into the regions of the dead: Ulyſſes ſhews by it at leaſt it was a vulgar opinion, and conſequently within the degrees of poetical probability; a poet being at liberty to follow common fame: in particular, it could not fail of having a full effect upon his Phæacian auditors, not only as it in ſome meaſure ſets him upon a level with Hercules, but as it is an example of a like undertaking with this which he has been relating, and therefore a probable method to gain their belief of it. *Euſtathius.*

Curious to view the kings of antient days,
The mighty deed that live in endleſs praiſe,
Reſolv'd I ſtand; and haply had ſurvey'd
The god-like Theſeus, and Perithous'-ſhade;
But ſwarms of ſpectres roſe from deepeſt hell,
With bloodleſs viſage, and with hideous yell,
They ſcream, they ſhriek; ſad groans and diſmal ſounds
Stun my ſcar'd ears, and pierce hell's utmoſt bounds.
No more my heart the diſmal din ſuſtains,
And my cold blood hangs ſhiv'ring in my veins;
Leſt Gorgon riſing from th' infernal lakes,
With horrours arm'd, and curls of hiſſing ſnakes,
Should fix me, ſtiffen'd at the monſtrous ſight,
A ſtony image, in eternal night!
Straight from the direful coaſt to purer air
I ſpeed my flight, and to my mates repair.
My mates aſcend the ſhip; they ſtrike their oars;
The mountains leſſen, and retreat the ſhores;
Swift o'er the waves we fly; the freſh'ning gales
Sing thro' the ſhrouds, and ſtretch the ſwelling ſails.

Ver. 789. ——*To purer air*——*I ſpeed my flight*——] It may not probably be unpleaſant to the reader, to obſerve the manner how the two great poets Homer and Virgil cloſe the ſcene of their infernal adventures, by reſtoring their heroes to the earth. Ulyſſes returns by the ſame way he deſcended, of which we have a plain deſcription in the beginning of this book: Virgil takes a different method; he borrows his concluſion from another part of Homer, in which he deſcribes the two gates of ſleep; the one is ivory, the other of horn: through the ivory gate iſſue falſhoods, through the gate of horn truths: Virgil diſmiſſes Æneas through the gate of falſhood: now what is this, but to inform us that all he relates is nothing but a dream, and that dream a falſhood? I ſubmit it to the critics who are more diſpoſed to find fault than I am, to determine whether Virgil ought to be cenſured for ſuch an acknowledgement, or praiſed for his ingenuity?

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

10 46 NOV